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Chairman:	Mr. Butagira	(Uganda)
later:	Mr. Anshar (Vice-Chairman)	(Indonesia)
later:	Mr. Butagira (Chairman)	(Uganda)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 64: Advancement of women (A/60/38, A/60/111, A/60/137, A/60/137/Corr.1, A/60/165, A/60/206, A/60/211, A/60/274, A/60/281, A/60/372, A/60/62-E/2005/10, A/60/79 and A/60/371)

Agenda item 65: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (A/60/170, A/60/111, A/60/211 and A/60/371)

1. **Ms. Mayanja** (Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that the current session was taking place against the backdrop of the historic consensus on gender equality and the empowerment of women reached at the 2005 World Summit, the decisions taken at the Economic and Social Council's substantive session of 2005, the Secretary-General's report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005) and the Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (Beijing+10), held at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2005. It was very encouraging that the Declaration issued at that session and the 2005 World Summit Outcome (A/60/L.1) both reaffirmed the importance of full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The latter also reaffirmed the importance of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. That consensus must now be translated into reality and added to the past five-year gains.

2. She recalled that world leaders had resolved to eliminate pervasive gender discrimination through a variety of measures (2005 World Summit Outcome, para. 58), and noted that progress had been made, particularly in establishing national machinery, national gender equality policies and strategies. Advances had also been made in women's participation in the economy, women's life expectancy, education for women and girls, awareness of the impact of HIV/AIDS, recognition of women's role in peace and security, mechanisms to promote women's rights and women's public sector participation. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had now been ratified or acceded to by 180 States, most recently the United Arab Emirates and Monaco.

3. At the beginning of the current session, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs had placed gender and social issues within the broader priority concern of the global rise of inequality, which was at the core of many of the issues addressed by the Committee. In particular, women's limited access to economic and non-economic opportunities was often at the root of their lower status in many societies. The need to eliminate such inequalities and ensure that women did not bear the brunt of the negative effects of globalization was perhaps the primary challenge in the period beyond Beijing+10.

4. Despite the global decline in absolute poverty, the goal of redressing disproportionately high poverty levels among women and their insufficient access to economic resources remained elusive. The Millennium Project report made a strong case for integrating the empowerment of women into national strategies. Violence against women and girls was another challenge requiring the Committee's immediate attention. At least one out of every three women worldwide had been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Abuse of women was increasingly becoming one of the top priorities of intergovernmental bodies, United Nations entities, Governments and civil society.

5. The Secretary-General's study on violence against women, due to be submitted at the sixty-first session, was expected to help bring the issue to the attention of decision-makers at the highest level, while matching policy pronouncements by action and resources. A campaign to combat sexual violence and abuse against women in situations of armed conflict was to mark the five-year anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Women's role as peacemaker and peacebuilder needed to be expanded. The anniversary would be used to stress women's important role in the peace process, in response to the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit. In particular, the Organization would outline United Nations system-wide action on implementation of the resolution to the Security Council, while the Secretary-General's related report would make a number of

recommendations to enhance accountability in that regard.

6. The political empowerment of women had been advanced in the past five years with a rise in the over 2 per cent proportion of women in parliaments around the world and, as at 2005, seven developing countries ranked among the 17 top performers. In 2004, 49 of the 58 countries holding lower house elections had witnessed an increase in the percentage of women. On the other hand, the trend towards a low representation of women in political and public life continued. In most countries, de facto equality between women and men in political participation was yet to be achieved. For example, only six of the 155 Heads of State and Government attending the 2005 World Summit had been women.

7. Both the 2005 World Summit Outcome and Beijing+10 had demonstrated that gender mainstreaming as a tool for promoting gender equality was increasingly showing results. The Committee's work offered an opportunity to further advance gender equality and women's empowerment, including mapping the road to accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and 2005 World Summit Outcome, setting in motion a consultation process on strengthening linkages between policymaking and needs on the ground, building partnerships and making the Organization's activities more responsive to women's needs. The Committee's contribution was to ensure that the decisions of Beijing+10 were fully integrated into the work of other Committees. She looked forward to the future work of the Commission on the Status of Women in reshaping the United Nations so that it could make a real difference to women's lives. In line with the 2005 World Summit Outcome, there would be a review of mandates, including those covering gender issues.

8. **Ms. Hannan** (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women), speaking first under agenda item 64, introduced the Secretary-General's report on violence against women migrant workers (A/60/137 and Corr.1). The report, which would be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, showed that violence against women migrant workers remained an issue of concern and emphasized the need for Member States to ratify international instruments on migration, particularly the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two Protocols, and all relevant International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions.

9. The report highlighted the context, value added, goals and scope of the study and gave an overview of ongoing and planned preparatory activities, in particular efforts to ensure the active participation of all stakeholders in the process. As stated in the report (para. 25), the highly consultative preparatory process was critical to create the momentum necessary to achieve effective follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations which the study would be proposing. To that end, further consultations would be organized to facilitate an exchange of views by all interested stakeholders in the coming months.

10. The Secretary-General's report on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/60/165) focused on the empowerment of rural women and outlined activities carried out by the United Nations system to improve their situation. It illustrated that the process of globalization had direct and indirect effects on the empowerment of rural women, both positive and negative (para. 62), and offered recommendations to strengthen the positive effects of globalization (para. 65), building on the framework provided by the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

11. The Secretary-General's report on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/60/206) and the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/60/38) played a crucial role in championing women's equality that went well beyond the absence of discriminatory legislation. She drew particular attention to the Committee's request for an extension of its meeting time, which was essential if it was to continue to be an effective accountability mechanism for women's human rights. She also highlighted the relationship between the Convention and policy processes and instruments within the intergovernmental framework, particularly linkages between implementation of the Convention and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in constructive dialogue with reporting States. The Committee's contribution to Beijing+10 had been an important step forward in intensifying attention to the Convention and States Parties' obligations in intergovernmental processes. In

that context, her Division continued to provide technical assistance to enhance the capacity of States parties to prepare reports under article 18 of the Convention.

12. She introduced the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (A/60/170) (agenda item 65), which reviewed steps taken to promote gender equality through gender mainstreaming, reviewed outcomes of major events, assessed the extent to which the Secretary-General's reports and Assembly resolutions had taken gender perspectives into account particularly in the context of preparations for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Tunis in November 2005. The report also recommended integrating gender perspectives in reports and resolutions, monitoring implementation of recommendations, fully integrating gender perspectives in all stages of the World Summit on the Information Society, and ensuring gender mainstreaming in the implementation of and follow-up to other major international conferences and summits, in particular in the context of the 2005 World Summit.

13. She noted also that the Secretary-General's report on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/60/165) recommended that the Summit should address rural women's priorities and needs and ensure their participation in developing and implementing information and communication technology (ICT) activities at the national and local levels. In that context, her Division ran a project to enhance the capacity of national machinery for the advancement of women in Africa to use ICT to achieve their goals. A panel on national implementation and ICT would also be organized during the World Summit on the Information Society.

14. The next session of the Commission on the Status of Women provided a unique opportunity to identify the key issues for follow-up to Beijing+10 in the context of its new multi-year programme of work beginning 2007. The ten-year review, near-universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the impetus provided for gender equality in the 2005 World Summit Outcome should visibly enhance progress in the year ahead. The Committee played a critical role in implementing what had already been agreed, by ensuring the political will and accountability that would translate commitments into action.

15. **Ms. Heyzer** (Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)), speaking under agenda item 64 only, said that, as illustrated by the Secretary-General's note on the activities of UNIFEM (A/60/274), the vision of a world free of want and fear depended upon gender equality and human rights being placed at the centre of human development and human security. The Beijing Platform for Action provided an essential pathway towards implementing that vision. In 2004, UNIFEM had concentrated on helping countries move forward on that pathway, bringing women's human rights into the development agenda and national strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The report documented progress made in reducing poverty, ending violence against women, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and promoting gender equality in democratic governance and post-conflict countries. In all those areas, UNIFEM had pursued an integrated approach, supporting laws and policies to promote women's human rights, helping institutions allocate resources and establish accountability mechanisms to make such laws and policies meaningful, strengthening gender advocates and changing harmful attitudes that perpetuated gender inequality around the world.

16. In its work on women's economic security, the Fund had concentrated on incorporating gender into poverty reduction strategies, helping Governments collect and analyse data and national and local government organizations shape options for migrant women, and building new partnerships with the private sector and the media. Its work on gender equality in democratic governance and post-conflict situations also reflected a holistic approach, supporting women's civil rights, political participation and leadership capacity in post-conflict reconstruction, for example in Afghanistan. Women's leadership was also a critical part of ongoing peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict countries, for example in the Great Lakes region, while in Peru gender had been successfully integrated into the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a model that was now being replicated elsewhere.

17. The Fund's work on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women illustrated the same

integrated approach: building the capacity of Governments and women's groups to bring about change by creating stronger frameworks for gender equality, increasing the effectiveness of implementation, monitoring and reporting, and developing partnerships at the local and national levels. The Fund worked with institutions in over 20 countries to implement the Convention, including through regional programmes in South East Asia and the Arab States.

18. The Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women, established by General Assembly resolution 50/166, now focused specifically on implementation of existing laws and policies to address the multiple forms of violence that women faced both during conflict and in times of peace. Strategies included awareness-raising campaigns, capacity-building for judicial, law enforcement, health and other officials, creation of data collection systems and indicators to monitor implementation. In 2005, the Trust Fund was focusing on linking gender violence to HIV/AIDS, for which it had for the first time secured private sector support.

19. Such examples showed that the realities of poverty, violence and discrimination marking the everyday lives of too many women could be changed. Strategies were successful because they worked at different levels and across different sectors. The international community's efforts on the Millennium Development Goals provided an opportunity to expand strategies, apply good practices more broadly and leverage change in women's lives. The High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Paris earlier in the year had represented a major shift in the relationship between programme and donor countries and the way in which development was funded and implemented. The aid effectiveness agenda was becoming a blueprint for donors and partners to implement on the basis of strong national ownership and responsibility. As United Nations efforts to strengthen national capacity to implement and manage national planning and development processes got under way, gender equality and strategies to achieve it must be incorporated into all coordination mechanisms. National plans for gender equality and national strategies to end violence against women must be made part of the aid effectiveness agenda.

20. In November, UNIFEM and the European Commission would co-host a conference in Brussels entitled "The Changing Development Architecture and Gender Equality", the objective of which was to ensure that gender equality and women's rights were strengthened in the framework of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction strategy papers. The affirmation of the centrality of gender equality to human rights, human development and human security had provided new momentum to the journey towards gender equality. That momentum must not be lost. In that regard, the international community must strengthen the institutional architecture of gender equality in order to more effectively institutionalize commitments, improve coherence and the focus on gender within country-level coordinating mechanisms, align gender equality measures in order to give countries a single, clear set of benchmarks, draw upon the wealth of technical expertise and knowledge amassed by UNIFEM, and commit the resources needed to apply strategies broadly, particularly in the poorest countries. If long-term and sustainable solutions were to be found to the challenges identified by world leaders, it was essential to empower women — one half of the world's population — to contribute their knowledge and insights to the process.

21. **Ms. Azarias** (Director, Internal Audit Division I, Office of Internal Oversight Services), introducing the Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) (A/60/281), noted that the working group on the future operation of INSTRAW and the General Assembly had rejected the recommendation made by OIOS in its previous report (A/56/907) to the effect that consideration should be given to the option of closing INSTRAW. The current report therefore focused on issues relating to the sustainability of INSTRAW.

22. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) had found that many entities in the United Nations system overlapped with INSTRAW. Also, some entities had developed information and communication technology tools to promote networking, thus competing with the Gender Awareness Information Networking System set up by INSTRAW. In the opinion of OIOS, United Nations system-wide coordination for the promotion of gender equality was the main mechanism through which INSTRAW could develop strong linkages with other United Nations entities and attain its programmatic objectives. However, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and

Advancement of Women, who chaired a system-wide Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality of which INSTRAW was a member, was not given sufficient formal authority for coordinating the programmes of Network members.

23. Although the working group on the future operation of INSTRAW had recommended abolishing the Institute's autonomous status, that step was not reflected in the revised INSTRAW statute approved by Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/57. The Institute's reliance on United Nations regular budget funding for most of its core requirements had been increasing. However, the recommendation by OIOS to consider improvements to the Institute's Board of Trustees had been implemented, and the former Board of Trustees had been reconstituted and integrated in the current Executive Board.

24. With regard to the Institute's programme of work, OIOS had found that outputs in 2004 had been generally limited to interim documents or updated materials. A training strategy had not been implemented, and website management should be improved.

25. The recommendation made by OIOS in its previous report, to the effect that the Secretary-General should spell out the roles and responsibilities of his Special Representative for INSTRAW, had not been implemented. Therefore, OIOS was recommending that the Secretary-General should propose to the Economic and Social Council that it assign a supervisory administrative role to the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs or the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

26. **Ms. Manalo** (Chairperson, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women) said that at its thirty-second and thirty-third sessions, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had considered the reports of 16 States parties, namely, Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Croatia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Gabon, Gambia, Guyana, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Paraguay, Samoa and Turkey. Many predominantly national non-governmental organizations had also submitted information to the Committee. For the first time information had been received from a national human rights institution.

27. She trusted that all 16 reporting States were actively engaged in follow-up to the concluding comments, and that NGOs were doing their best to ensure that systematic action was being taken to implement the Committee's recommendations. She also encouraged the entities of the United Nations system that were active in the 16 reporting countries to support the efforts of governments and NGOs.

28. Among the Committee's milestone outputs in the past year had been its work under the Optional Protocol. Notably, the Committee had adopted its views on the merits of communication 2/2003, *A.T. v Hungary*, a case involving domestic violence. She wished to express the Committee's appreciation to States parties for cooperating with the Committee in the examination of communications and implementation of the inquiry procedure. She encouraged all States parties to disseminate information about the procedures, as called for in article 13 of the Optional Protocol.

29. In its continued effort to enhance its methods of work, the Committee prepared lists of issues and questions for initial as well as periodic reports. Only two meetings per State party were allocated for the constructive dialogue. Guidelines had been issued on the length of reports and of written responses, so as to limit the volume of documentation. The Committee had started to use country task forces for the constructive dialogue. It had taken steps to monitor implementation of the Convention in States whose reports were significantly overdue. She wished to thank both Cape Verde and Saint Lucia which, at the Committee's invitation, had submitted all their overdue reports as combined reports in time for consideration in 2006.

30. The Committee had stated its views on the advisability of appointing a Special Rapporteur on laws that discriminated against women. It had also discussed the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women. It had held a preliminary discussion on the plan of action of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and looked forward to meeting her personally in January 2006. The Committee had also made a significant contribution to and played a very active role in the efforts to further harmonize reporting procedures within the framework of the inter-committee meeting and the chairpersons meeting.

31. On the subject of the Committee's request for extension of meeting time, she stressed that the Committee had streamlined the manner in which it considered reports. However, the significant effort that States, as well as NGOs, invested in the reporting process could not be reduced further if it was to remain meaningful. There was an urgent need to find a long-term solution that would allow the Committee to implement its responsibilities under the Convention and its Optional Protocol in an effective and timely manner, as well as place it on an equal footing with other human rights treaty bodies in regard to meeting time. Accordingly, the Committee had requested authorization for a third annual session of three weeks. It had also requested authorization, as a temporary measure for 2006 and 2007, to meet in parallel working groups to address the backlog of reports awaiting consideration.

32. **Ms. Moreno** (Director, United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)) said that the Institute's pioneering research on the gender dimensions of remittance flows had demonstrated the significant transformative potential of women's migration and economic empowerment for household gender relations, community well-being and economic growth. Policies and projects that facilitated the development impact of remittances must be analysed. As half of remittance senders and the majority of remittance recipients, women were playing a central role in managing and distributing such income. Projects aimed at maximizing the potential of remittances must include women, and they needed access to financial management and investment, credit, training in microenterprise management and other resources.

33. As documented or undocumented migrants, women were exposed to insecurities and exploitation that jeopardized their economic, social and personal well-being. The Institute looked forward to the General Assembly's high-level dialogue on international migration and development in 2006 and expected that gender issues would be at the forefront of the discussion. As the primary agent behind the protection and promotion of human rights, the United Nations had a responsibility to ensure that the rights of migrants were protected. The Millennium Development Goals must become a reality for migrant populations living outside their countries of origin.

34. The Institute's work on gender and security sector reform had shown that unless the definition of security was reconceptualized to include the human security of women at home and in their communities, women would continue to live in situations of conflict and violence, whether or not their countries were at war.

35. The three pillars of the Organization's work — peace and security, development and human rights — would stand only if they were built on a foundation of gender equality. International commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals, viewed from a gender perspective, provided a unique opportunity to strengthen the Organization's work and consolidate its role as a major force in the empowerment of women, development, growth and progress.

36. The Institute was beginning a new era in which quality research and training for the advancement of women could expand, thereby becoming an instrument for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Precise information on the future work of INSTRAW could be found in the Report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/60/372.

37. On behalf of INSTRAW, she wished to thank all countries that had contributed to the Institute and ask those that had not yet done so to analyse the work, results and potential of the Institute and to consider the possibility of joining in sending voluntary contributions to INSTRAW at the present crucial transition moment.

38. **Mr. Neil** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that considering the progress made in the advancement of women since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, there was reason to be cautiously optimistic about the future; however, many obstacles remained. Women's advancement could only be achieved if women's health needs at basic levels were addressed. In particular, HIV/AIDS had assumed an increasingly feminine face, with the increasing number of women and girls infected with the disease surpassing their male counterparts in the incidence of new infections. Other preventable health casualties related to child-bearing, such as maternal mortality, had for too long not received the attention deserved. Another preventable, treatable medical condition was fistula, which had been referred to as the "nightmare for African women".

39. Violence against women had been one of the most degrading violations of women's basic rights and fundamental freedoms. As noted in the interim report of the Secretary-General on violence against women (A/60/211), the phenomenon persisted in epidemic proportions in all parts of the world and warranted a comprehensive examination of the root causes.

40. Poverty among women was a particular problem for many countries of the developing world and was directly related to unemployment. The globalized environment was marked by shrinking economies and a reduction of employment opportunities, forcing many women into the informal sector. Globalization was likewise marked by the increasing mobility of women, especially from developing countries. Migrant women were often vulnerable to violence, abuse and many inequities.

41. The destruction caused by recent natural disasters in Central America, particularly in Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico, was a reminder of the negative impact of natural disasters on the social and economic well-being of people, particularly vulnerable women and children in rural areas. The report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the situation of rural women (A/60/165) included some useful recommendations which, when implemented, could help to realize the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals.

42. Gender equality targets set by Beijing and the Millennium Development Goals were indelibly linked and mutually reinforcing. Yet the Millennium Project report indicated that there was limited and uneven progress on gender equality targets. A redoubling of efforts was indicated, particularly as equality in educational opportunities was critical. The Group of 77 and China reaffirmed that while the primary responsibility for the advancement of women lay with Governments, international cooperation remained indispensable for the full implementation of Beijing. International cooperation was not only about fulfilling official development assistance (ODA) obligations; it was also about the transfer of technology, information and data sharing and technical assistance, including through South-South cooperation, to which the Group of 77 and China were fully committed.

43. The Group of 77 and China strongly supported the work of INSTRAW in its important role in the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. They had noted the new horizons being explored by the Institute in responding to the need to provide research information on some of the most topical issues for developing countries from a gender perspective, in all regions across the globe. They acknowledged the general contributions made, particularly by countries in the European Union, in maintaining the Institute, and encouraged all States to make voluntary contributions to it to assist it in executing its mandate in the area of research, particularly in its critical transitional period.

44. The Group of 77 and China acknowledged the valuable work of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in providing financial and technical assistance to developing countries to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. They also recognized the role of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women to integrate a gender perspective in United Nations activities. The Commission on the Status of Women was also especially acknowledged for its work in the follow-up to Beijing and for its ten-year review, as well as its continued commitment to ensuring that women's equal rights and empowerment continued to be pursued to full implementation.

45. **Mr. O'Neill** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries (Bulgaria and Romania), the candidate countries (Croatia and Turkey), stabilization and association process countries Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, said that 2005 had been an important year for gender equality and the advancement of women.

46. The European Union welcomed the adoption of the Declaration at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2005 and, in particular, the full and unequivocal reaffirmation by all Member States of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Outcome at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Nevertheless, women were still denied equal rights and access to economic resources and were often the victims of violence. Women, especially girls, were disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS, rendering them unable to care for the ill and orphaned. Moreover, since Beijing, there had been

a significant increase in the trafficking of women and girls, particularly for the purpose of commercial and sexual exploitation. In addition, women were often exposed to double or multiple discrimination on grounds of their ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. For all those reasons Member States were under obligation to redouble their efforts to implement the commitments of the Beijing meetings.

47. Women's issues should not be regarded in isolation and he therefore welcomed the recognition given to gender equality and the advancement of women in the discussions preceding the Millennium Summit (September 2005). The Declaration recognized that the successful promotion of development, security and human rights required the full and equal participation of women. Wherever women continued to be underrepresented in political life, or denied quality education on a par with men, they would be unable to contribute to the economic development of their communities and society as a whole would suffer. In this regard, the European Union welcomed the report of the Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality and urged Member States to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

48. Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, the international community had come to recognize not just the extent to which women and girls were particularly affected by conflict, but also how much and how often women held the key to its peaceful resolution. The European Union paid a tribute to the many civil society organizations that had brought those issues to the world's attention and urged it to implement that resolution. It hoped that the recently-established Peacebuilding Commission would demonstrate a strong commitment to implement fully resolution 1325 (2000). It was time to examine how this resolution could be better implemented at regional and national level and the European Union had begun integrating the resolutions' provisions in its crisis management operations.

49. The year 2005 marked the mid-term review of the European Union's "Lisbon strategy", adopted by the European Council in 2000, which acknowledged that gender equality and the advancement of women were essential to the achievement of full employment, sustained economic growth and social cohesion. The implementation of gender equality, however, required strong national mechanisms and international structures. In February 2005, the European Union partners had agreed to ensure that gender equality bodies and structures across the Union were equipped with the human and financial resources needed to function effectively. They also recognized that gender mainstreaming was a key strategy for achieving gender equality. They began to identify processes and tools that would encourage greater accountability when addressing gender equality issues and to improve the collection and dissemination of data, disaggregated by gender. During the second half of 2005, the European Union was focusing on women's issues in the world of work, such as unemployment, the gender pay gap, and the unequal share of the burden of unpaid labour between women and men.

50. The next year, 2006, would mark the 50th anniversary of the Commission on the Status of Women. It provided the opportunity for a constructive exchange of ideas and best practice between Member States and world experts. The discussions on the working methods of the Commission should take this into account.

51. **Mr. Mahiga** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), said that SADC associated itself with a statement made by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. SADC upheld the principle of gender equality as a necessary and rational approach to economic growth, poverty reduction and overall human development. Quality reproductive health and other related services were made more accessible to both women and men and had become an integral part of national and regional policies designed to achieve sustainable development in the SADC region.

52. The Community reaffirmed its commitment to gender parity in all political structures and public sector institutions and had decided, at the recent SADC Summit, to raise the target of 30 per cent of women in decision-making bodies to 50 per cent, consistent with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as with the Outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

53. Gender equality was a cross-cutting issue directly linked to the attainment and enhancement of other Millennium Development Goals and the Declaration

adopted at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which called for speedy and accelerated implementation of all international commitments relating to gender, was gratifying.

54. SADC remained committed to its 1997 Declaration on Gender and Development and the 1998 Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children. It had also ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Its member States had enacted various measures to protect the rights of women and had undertaken public education programmes on that subject. However, the conflict between traditions and statutory regulations continued to present a challenge for Member States.

55. SADC was encouraged to note that the need to develop a global policy framework for combating violence against women had been recognized. The speedy conclusion of the in-depth study on all forms of violence against women would increase much-needed public awareness on the issue.

56. It was further pleased to see increased gender sensitivity in the General Assembly, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report in his report on the follow-up to Beijing and the Platform for Action (A/60/170). It welcomed the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General in his report but added that increased attention should be given to capacity-building with respect to gender analysis and advocacy in order to facilitate their implementation.

57. The Community also recognized the commendable work carried out by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and urged donor countries and partners to support its multi-year funding framework 2004-2007.

58. The quest for gender equality could not be achieved without addressing the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas, where most of them lived. As things stood, they were marginalized and excluded from decision-making affecting their lives and self-advancement. SADC was therefore encouraged that the General Assembly had consistently given attention to the situation of rural women and welcomed the report (A/60/165).

59. SADC noted with appreciation the technical support it received from the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the constructive dialogue between the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the SADC member States. It reiterated its commitment to the further implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the Outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and appealed for the continued support of the international community.

60. **Ms. Al-Saleh** (Oman) said that Omani women enjoyed a wide range of civil and political freedoms founded on Islamic sharia law and civil law. In 2005 the laws and other measures had established a protective legal environment for Omani women, setting national standards in accordance with international treaties and conventions to which Oman was a State party. In May 2005, her Government had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

61. During the past few years, Oman had attained very high standards in the area of women's health, education and the labour market. Fertility rates had been reduced, family planning was practised and women had access to free birth control and counselling services in all institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Health. Women had also made extensive gains in the field of education and equal access to free education without gender discrimination was now guaranteed by law.

62. Oman's Ministry of Social Development handled all aspects of women's affairs. At the community level, however, such issues were dealt with by Omani women's associations and local community development centres.

63. On the labour front, Omani women were legally entitled to pursue the career of their choice and were active participants in social development policies. Increasing numbers of women were being appointed to high-level official positions in Government, business and the media with significant impact on the country's development policies. In 2004, Oman's first woman minister with a Cabinet portfolio was appointed as Minister of Higher Education. There were now four women ministers in the Government and two women ambassadors in the Omani diplomatic service. Oman's efforts in the advancement of women could not have been fully accomplished without the support of the UNICEF country office, to which she wished to

express appreciation. With the encouragement and support from the Government, Omani women now had equal access to health, education and employment as men. They were a vital building block of the modern Omani State and would continue to play an increasingly important role in that society.

64. **Ms. Li** Xiaomei (China), speaking on agenda items 66 and 67, said that the Chinese delegation supported the statement made by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It believed that violence against women was currently one of the main obstacles to the full enjoyment of women's rights. At its forty-ninth session, the Commission on the Status of Women issued a Declaration on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Her delegation believed that Declaration, adopted at Beijing in August 2005 and entitled "Solidarity for Gender Equality, Development and Peace", would guide the work of the United Nations in future.

65. It was encouraging that in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, Heads of State had agreed unanimously that progress for women was progress for all and had committed themselves to taking measures to promote gender equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination.

66. The future of women depended on the implementation of Beijing+10 and the Plan of Action. The United Nations should build upon the momentum of the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference and work to achieve such goals as: eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls; stepping up efforts to eradicate poverty among women; guaranteeing women full participation in political, economic and social decision-making; accelerating the achievement of universal education; ensuring that women enjoyed quality health care and acquired knowledge and means for preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS; and promoting the equal participation of women in peacekeeping activities. It should also implement policies aimed at mainstreaming gender perspectives; pay special attention to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of women; pay attention to the gender identity of men in society; create an international environment of peace and solidarity favourable to the development of women; and respect the right of countries to choose, within the international framework, their own distinctive approach to advance the cause of women.

67. **Mr. Afifi** (Egypt) said that his Government had adopted an ambitious approach to equal treatment of men and women eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. It was, for instance, introducing a strategy to empower women politically, economically and socially. One of the first steps it had taken to implement the Outcome of the Fourth World Conference was to create the National Council for Women to evaluate and monitor programmes and policies seeking to empower women. The Council had been successful in integrating gender issues into the national plan for social and economic development for 2002-2007, thus enabling women to participate fully in the development process and to eliminate gender disparities. As a consequence, investments in programmes supporting women's issues had dramatically increased. Under the new five-year plan, investments devoted to women and small enterprises had doubled compared to the previous plan. There had also been an increase in family projects to empower women so that they might improve their family income.

68. In the area of education, the Government had been able to increase the ratio of females to males in primary and secondary education; females in public education now accounted for 54 per cent of total students and 49 per cent of those in university. It had also created new educational establishments with the involvement of both the public and private sectors. Enrolment in educational institutions had increased considerably, especially in rural areas. There had also been a considerable decrease in the dropout rate among women.

69. In Egypt, the participation of women had increased in all areas of public life, especially in high positions. There were now 14 members of Parliament, a woman judge and 35 women ambassadors.

70. The Government had cooperated with the National Council of Women to review all laws concerning women to bring them in line with its international commitments. All legislation that embodied discrimination between women and men had been abrogated such as that pertaining to the right of women to travel abroad, divorce and marriage rights.

71. The reference in the Report of the Committee (A/60/38) regarding Palestinian pregnant women and their mistreatment at Israeli checkpoints reaffirmed the importance of ending the inhumane practices against

the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. As a provisional arrangement, the United Nations should endeavour to undertake to protect Palestinian women in the occupied area.

72. Egypt had participated in the resolution that initiated the study on all forms of violence against women. It stressed the importance of monitoring this phenomenon and of preparing future strategies to combat it.

73. **Ms. Warif-Halabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the aim of enabling and empowering women was to develop their individuality, abilities and effectiveness. Success in that endeavour was measured by women's participation in political and economic affairs and by the resources devoted to women's issues. The Syrian Arab Republic, guided by the Beijing Platform for Action and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, was working to strengthen women's roles by removing obstacles to their participation in political and public life and by making them part of the sustainable development effort.

74. Government policies had borne fruit, with gender parity improved in primary, secondary and vocational education between 1990 and 2004 and targets for the education of girls exceeded in some cases. While women had held 6.9 per cent of parliamentary seats in the fifth parliament, they held 12 per cent of seats in the twelfth parliament. The economic advancement of women had been included among the goals of the five-year plan covering 2001 to 2005. Legislation had been enacted to eliminate discrimination against women in access to credit, including mortgage loans. Health and safety legislation applying to employment treated men and women equally. To improve women entrepreneurs' visibility and representation, including representation abroad, chambers of commerce were providing services specifically for their benefit.

75. The Syrian Institute for family affairs was consistently working to improve living conditions for women. Recalling that the Beijing Platform for Action had included targets regarding women in occupied areas, her delegation pointed out that women's organizations in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to monitor the situation of women in the Golan and in occupied Palestinian lands and to call for an end to the occupation.

76. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan) said that, despite greater awareness of gender issues, and despite the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Millennium Development Goals centred on women and the establishment of the International Criminal Court, the situation of the world's women remained grim. They continued to account for a disproportionate number of victims of poverty, violence and physical and psychological abuse, in almost equal measure in developed and developing countries, and irrespective of their religious or cultural environment.

77. The advancement of women was an international responsibility requiring cooperation and collaboration. It was a cross-cutting issue, affecting development, human rights, democracy and education. The plight of women in rural areas, conflict situations and territories under foreign occupation, and the situation of migrant and trafficked women must be given top priority. Women in general continued to suffer discrimination and exclusion and unequal access to resources and opportunities.

78. As a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and to major International Labour Organization regional conventions, Pakistan was committed to changing the lives of millions of its women. The problems they faced in Pakistani society existed in other societies, including those of developed countries; they were often attributable to illiteracy and primitive traditions. The Government addressed gender issues on the political, economic, social and legal fronts, and the last ten years had brought progress.

79. Pakistan had more women representatives in national, provincial and local government than any other Asian country. There was an adequate number of women ministers in the federal and provincial governments. Women's Political Schools were training women for public office. The country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) incorporated the gender perspective, and women were able to finance income-generating projects using a variety of microcredit facilities.

80. A Women's Health Project focused on improving the health, nutrition and social status of women and girls. Crisis centres provided temporary shelter, free legal aid, medical attention and counselling to women in distress. In 2004, a Bill had been put forward to ensure that all perpetrators of honour killings were

tried. The Government had encouraged serious debate of the Hudood laws.

81. **Ms. Assoumou** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that Côte d'Ivoire, aware of women's role in economic and social development, ensured that it was represented at all international meetings on women's issues. It reaffirmed its commitment to international instruments on those issues, and to the documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and had enshrined the principle of gender equality in its July 2000 Constitution. That document also banned all physical and psychological violence, mutilation, early or forced marriage and sexual harassment.

82. The Government had appointed women to senior positions and ensured that posts in the army, the police and central administration traditionally held by men were open to women. The National Health Development Plan (PNDS) for 1996 to 2005 had reduced mother and child mortality and women had been made responsible for maintaining village water supply infrastructure. Primary school fees and uniforms had been abolished and school books were supplied free, generating an increase in girls' school attendance. Literacy programmes for rural areas had specifically targeted women. The National Population Action Plan for 2002 to 2006 aimed to increase women's economic power. New legislation had paved the way for mutual savings and loan mechanisms targeted at women, and the country's various social funds supported entrepreneurial ventures by women.

83. The Government was aware that it had much work to do to fulfil its Beijing commitments, but the crisis which had begun in September 2002 had seriously hampered efforts to tackle poverty among women. One of the new challenges was to improve women's ability to play a part in conflict resolution.

84. **Ms. Al-Muzaini** (Kuwait) said that the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women, which was the result of the first ever General Assembly mandate for a study on the subject, would help to provide a benchmark for future action. All discrimination against women stood in the way of equity, equality and justice, principles which Kuwait had enshrined in its Constitution. Kuwait had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1994, incorporating the Convention into its national law. It had submitted two reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and a combined third and fourth report was in preparation.

85. In May 2005, the Kuwaiti parliament had amended the Electoral Act to enable women to participate in parliamentary elections for the first time. Kuwait would accordingly withdraw its reservation to Article 7, paragraph (a) of the Convention. Women had been appointed to cabinet-level positions in the Government and occupied more and more leadership positions, especially in municipal authorities.

86. Women could contribute to development and serve society through means other than remunerated labour. They played a central and growing role in civil society. The Kuwaiti Federation of Women, founded in 1994, sought to expand women's participation in social and volunteer work, and their representation in international conferences. Women's issues were also monitored by bodies such as the Kuwait Bar Association.

87. Kuwait had adopted mechanisms to protect women's rights and fundamental freedoms and to prevent violence against them, especially in the workplace. The Division for Family and Women's Affairs of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour sought to improve women's awareness of their rights and to improve their situation. All public- and private-sector efforts in that regard were based on the values of Kuwaiti society and the teachings of Islam.

88. **Ms. Van den Brink** (the Netherlands) said that violence against women, particularly domestic violence, was a fact of life all over the world and as serious a cause of incapacity and death as cancer. All women were potential victims, regardless of their culture, religion or ideology, age, or social or economic status. Moreover, when women became victims, their children became victims too. Because true safety for adults and children began in the family environment, the cycle of domestic violence must be stopped. United Nations action on that front had included the appointment of Ms. Yakin Ertürk as Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

89. The Netherlands, with its long experience of discussing and combating domestic violence realized that legal and policy measures could not be effective unless victims were given care and support and unless the subject was publicly debated. If it was surrounded by secrecy, change would be difficult. The message

must be that domestic violence was intolerable and must be fought in every possible way.

90. Her delegation believed that combating domestic violence required other forms of action. The first requirement was more research, statistics and documentation. Despite the problems of underreporting by victims and under-recording by police and judicial authorities, it would be impossible to measure success without facts and figures. The second requirement was to recognize that domestic violence was neither a private matter nor an excusable way of maintaining family discipline, but a threat to economic development and welfare. The Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved without eradicating domestic violence, if only because of the cost of coping with the phenomenon.

91. The third requirement was continued empowerment of women, so that they could take control of their own lives and bodies. Without such an approach, increased awareness of victimization could have the positive effect of creating empathy and understanding, but the negative effect of reinforcing stereotypes of women as helpless. The fourth requirement was recognition that domestic violence could not be counselled, policed or legislated out of existence. It was not just a women's issue, and men must be involved in combating it. The fifth requirement was more focus on enforcement of legislation, and an end to laws which emphasized family reunification over the rights of women and girls.

92. **Ms. Strauss** (International Organization for Migration (IOM)), speaking on agenda item 64, said that many misperceptions surrounded violence against migrants and the problem of trafficking. The first was that all traffickers were men; in fact, almost one third were women, many of them trafficking victims themselves. The second was that only women were victims of trafficking; in fact, the number of men and children involved had increased. The third was that the sole purpose of trafficking in human beings was sexual exploitation; in fact, many people were trafficked to work, beg or steal.

93. While trafficking must remain high on the agenda of human rights and migration issues, female migrants must not be stigmatized. Migration could empower and emancipate women, and provide financial independence abroad and better status at home.

94. Trafficking within countries had become commonplace, challenging the usual definition of the phenomenon. While most Governments were willing to tackle international trafficking, few had recognized the specific challenge of trafficking within their borders. Without adequate assistance to tackle all forms of trafficking, victims were likely to be trafficked again.

95. Migrant women were particularly likely to suffer violence. Because the gender dimension had not been mainstreamed into migration matters, it was not well known that half of the 200 million international migrants were female. Although violence was often thought to be more common in specific groups, in fact it transcended societies, cultures, geographical regions and the passage of time. Women who left their countries of origin for better living conditions often worked in appalling conditions, and were more likely than men to be exposed to forced labour, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution and other violence. They were also more likely than men to accept hazardous working environments and low pay. Many were not well-informed about combating sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

96. Migrant women's countries of origin and countries of destination must define clear measures to promote and protect the human rights and dignity of female migrants and maximize the benefits of their presence. Although a number of countries had enacted legislation and developed national strategies against violence, fewer than 20 per cent of the Organization's Member States were party to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/60/SR.11

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Summary record of the 11th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 12 October 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Butagira ..... (Uganda)
later: Mr. Anshor (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Indonesia)
later: Mr. Butagira ..... (Uganda)

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05-54530 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 62: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family *(continued)* (A/C.3/60/L.3 and L.4)

Draft decision A/C.3/60/L.3: Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities

1. **Ms. Banzon Abalos** (Philippines) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and also Australia, Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, Myanmar and Timor-Leste.

2. She read out a number of revisions to the text, including a new preambular paragraph, to be inserted after the fourth preambular paragraph, which read: "Reaffirming the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits and their respective follow-up reviews,".

3. **Ms. Enkhtsetseg** (Mongolia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and also Brazil, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mexico, Myanmar, Switzerland and Timor-Leste.

4. She read out a number of minor revisions to the text.

Agenda item 64: Advancement of women *(continued)* (A/60/38, A/60/62-E/2005/10, A/60/79, A/60/111, A/60/137 and Corr.1, A/60/165, A/60/206, A/60/211, A/60/274, A/60/281, A/60/371 and A/60/372)

Agenda item 65: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" *(continued)* (A/60/111, A/60/170, A/60/211 and A/60/371)

5. **Mr. Widhya** (Cambodia) said that poverty eradication was closely intertwined with the advancement of women. In Cambodia, women were more vulnerable to poverty because they suffered from various forms of inequality, including with respect to distribution of income, access to credit and property ownership, as well as from gender biases in the labour market and society at large. Any poverty reduction strategies and policies should therefore emphasize the importance of achieving gender equality and the advancement of women.

6. Cambodia had been endeavouring for the past 10 years to overcome many obstacles to eradicating poverty, in particular the dreadful gender imbalance caused by the genocidal regime of Pol Pot. Under his rule, 75 per cent of households had been run by widows and women, because most men had been killed mercilessly by Pol Pot's henchmen and zealous child soldiers. The importance of women in ensuring economic growth must therefore not be overlooked. His Government had taken a proactive approach by incorporating gender issues into its national plan for strategic development, which encompassed the activities, goals and indicators of every Government ministry. Furthermore, the Ministry of Women's and Veterans' Affairs had led efforts to reduce gender-based disparities and improve gender equity in health, education, agriculture and legal protection.

7. Women had recently taken a more active role in the political life of the country. In the 2003 general election in Cambodia, 12 per cent of the parliamentary seats and 13 per cent of the posts for Senator had gone to women candidates, an increase of some 18 per cent over the previous term. Those results showed that the involvement of women in the decision-making process at both local and national levels had improved significantly.

8. His Government was grappling with the threat of HIV/AIDS, which was affecting women and children in particular. There were currently some 50,000 women living with HIV in Cambodia. He reiterated his Government's call to the international community to remain firm in its commitment to assist developing countries in the fight against that scourge, including especially the commitments made in the Brussels Programme of Action for the least developed countries.

9. Poverty eradication must be complemented by equal access to education. Education indicators for the period 2003-2004 continued to show a decreasing share of female students at the higher levels of education. Schools must be made more accessible to all, regardless of social and economic background. His Government therefore supported the recommendations of the Millennium Project report known as "quick

wins", including the elimination of school fees and user fees for basic health services as well as the provision of free school meals for all children using locally produced foods. As the problem was not unique to Cambodia, his delegation called for a greater effort by the international community, under the guidance of the United Nations, to implement more long-term initiatives aimed at creating environments conducive to the full education of girls and to make consistent and concerted efforts to improve the status and welfare of women.

10. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) said that his country placed particular emphasis on the advancement and empowerment of women with a view to enabling them to enjoy their rights and participate in public life. It was important, however, in addressing the advancement of women, to take into account social diversity and differing cultures and traditions. Despite some progress since the Beijing World Conference on Women, there was a need for still greater efforts to address the negative impact of globalization on the developing countries which particularly affected women. In that connection, international efforts were required to incorporate the States affected by globalization in the world economy.

11. The report of the Secretary-General had reviewed the action taken by the General Assembly and its Main Committees at the previous session towards the objective of ensuring equality through the strategy of mainstreaming a gender perspective. His delegation welcomed what had been achieved in that connection but considered that the report should have focused on such issues as the eradication of poverty, violence against women, the exploitation of women for the purposes of prostitution and the trafficking in women and girls without regard for their dignity or rights. His delegation called on the Division for the Advancement of Women to continue its efforts and to reflect those issues in its report at the next session of the General Assembly. Efforts should be made to address the fundamental causes of violence against women and the means of combating it, including legislation at the national and international levels.

12. The plight of Palestinian women under the Israeli occupation required action by the United Nations to alleviate their suffering and to ensure that Palestinian women were able to enjoy the right to life and dignity.

13. At the national level, his country had for decades been among the leading States in promoting the enjoyment by women of their rights and their effective participation in public life. It fully supported the aims and objectives of the Beijing Conference and of the Beijing Platform for Action. High-level committees had been established in the Sudan to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the various international conferences and the parallel national meetings. Among them had been the meeting of Sudanese women which had taken place on the fringe of the Oslo Donors' Conference in April 2005 and had made recommendations to that conference on establishing peace, confidence-building, and post-conflict reconstruction.

14. In conclusion, his delegation expressed the hope that the study to be made available at the next session of the General Assembly on the subject of violence against women would form a basis for worldwide efforts to eradicate such violence.

15. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the empowerment of women and gender equality were key priorities for the Governments he represented, which considered women's rights to be human rights, entitling them to participate on an equal footing with men in social, political, economic and cultural life. It was accordingly essential for an environment to be created at the national and the international level that would be conducive to the progressive enhancement of the status of women in every field.

16. CARICOM States welcomed the increased prominence of gender equality on the international agenda and the progress achieved in the empowerment of women, which was nevertheless still challenged by worrisome trends in several areas. Referring to recent reports, he noted for example that HIV/AIDS infection rates were increasing more rapidly among females and that, despite advances in the education of women and girls, women were still more likely to be unemployed, had less access than men to managerial and senior positions and suffered disproportionately from gender-based violence. It was therefore urgent to strengthen gender mainstreaming at all levels and to address gender as a crosscutting element in all social and macroeconomic planning.

17. Other related current concerns of CARICOM included the gender dimension of natural disasters,

gender-based violence, trafficking in persons, and the feminization of poverty. He emphasized that efforts to combat poverty, which was sometimes masked by the relatively high development indicators of the region, particularly among women, were hampered by the international situation. He referred in that connection to the negative impacts on women of the liberalization of the banana industry and the proposed adjustment of the EU sugar regime, stressing that unless women were economically empowered, there could be no gender equality. He urged the international community to address issues relating to women's education and health in tandem with those of greater market access for commodities from developing countries, debt relief, development assistance and differential treatment for small island developing States.

18. CARICOM States were taking steps to strengthen the capacity of police officers and frontline workers to assist victims of domestic violence. They urged States to contribute to the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women and looked forward to completion of the in-depth study by the United Nations on the subject.

19. CARICOM reaffirmed the centrality of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and considered that interaction between the Committee set up under that instrument and Member States was essential to advancing the cause of women's rights. He expressed support in that connection for the extension of the annual meeting time of that Committee.

20. In conclusion, he expressed appreciation for the constant support for the empowerment of women extended to CARICOM States by bilateral and multilateral agencies, welcoming in that regard the revitalization of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

21. **Mrs. Thomas** (Cuba) said that, despite the progress achieved towards the Millennium Goals of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, problems such as the feminization of poverty, violence in all its forms, including economic violence, trafficking in persons and forced prostitution still prevailed worldwide. She advocated a broad approach to those problems, particularly that of violence against women, which had to be eliminated and should be condemned by the international community. At a time when women were suffering the consequences of the globalization of neo-liberal policies, it was esssential to redouble international efforts for the implementation of public strategies to benefit the people at large, especially women.

22. The objectives and goals of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the results of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly needed to be followed up as a matter of priority in order to contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. It was likewise imperative to continue emphasizing the promotion of gender equality and the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women, as well as the increased participation of women in decision-making.

23. In any strategy for the promotion of women it was crucial to guarantee women's sexual and reproductive rights, through universal access to the necessary services. Cuba accordingly supported the work of the United Nations system in that important area and continued to cooperate with the international community to promote the advancement of women and eradicate discrimination against them. Political will had to be reflected in public discourse, while the reiteration of unattained goals had to give way to the formulation of concrete measures for their achievement, so that they could at last become realities.

24. Cuba, for its part, had made indisputable advances in all the areas under discussion, having high proportions of women in gainful employment in general, and particularly in senior positions, including 35 per cent of the seats in parliament. Those advances had been achieved despite the blockade imposed by the United States, which was in itself the greatest form of violence against Cuban women. Her country would continue to apply political will to address all the outstanding obstacles and challenges.

25. **Mr. Ritter** (Liechtenstein), noting the Committee's particular attention at its previous session to specific forms of violence against women, said that the emphasis was probably not simply a sign of growing awareness that such violence was a major impediment to the advancement of women but also a reflection of the lack of a holistic understanding of the problem. He therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's in-depth study on the subject, as it could contribute significantly to enhancing political

commitment and creating momentum for action in that area. Because of regional variations in the phenomenon, the study would benefit from work done at the regional level. He referred in that connection to a study being undertaken on violence against children, within the framework of the Council of Europe, suggesting that the parallel preparation of the two studies might offer an opportunity to identify causes and structural factors common to both forms of violence.

26. He expressed support for the identification of best practices and spoke of his country's experience in designing and implementing measures to combat violence against women, entailing both protection and prevention. The measures also included the provision of assistance to victims, an issue that should not be neglected, particularly when in the context of armed conflict, which tended to exacerbate violence against women. Efforts to restore peace and rebuild society had to place particular emphasis on the reintegration of victims of violence into society, while only the genuine empowerment of women could ensure not only that women were sufficiently protected against violence but also that they served as their own best protectors.

27. **Ms. Henouda** (Algeria), noting with satisfaction the measures taken by Governments to honour the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women, said that those measures had helped to improve equality of opportunity for women in education, health and employment and integrated them better into society and into economic and political life. Nevertheless, many women still suffered in various regions from poverty, violence and marginalization and were increasingly threatened by HIV/AIDS. Violence against women was particularly worrying since, besides being a violation of their human rights, it endangered their health, particularly in their capacity as mothers. She joined previous speakers in welcoming the Secretary-General's forthcoming report on the subject, expressing the hope that it would help to identify ways of eradicating the phenomenon.

28. In Algerian society, women participated on an equal footing with men in economic, social and political life, as guaranteed by the Constitution. In order to consolidate further the rights of women in her country, Algeria had actively sought to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It had focused particularly on education, achieving parity between boys and girls at all levels, and having even a larger proportion of males than females at the higher level. In addition, girls prevented by circumstances from enjoying the benefits of schooling, received free training at training centres or through distance education. Gender equality had also been achieved in the fields of health, social security and retirement, and likewise in employment where women were well represented not only in the professions but also in the army, the police force, diplomacy and the higher echelons of the State.

29. Much still remained to be done. Algeria had accordingly ratified all the international human rights instruments, particularly those in support of women, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on which it had submitted its second report in January 2005. Some of the concerns expressed on that occasion had, moreover, already been taken into account through amendments to Algeria's family and nationality codes, while others were being studied attentively in the light of the recommendations made by the experts.

30. **Ms. Shahar** (Israel) said that Israel believed, as a matter of democratic principle, that by supporting women it supported the whole of society, because women's contributions to society were essential for its own advancement. It had accordingly always given priority to gender equality, the ultimate aim being a gender-blind society where citizens could rise as high as their ambitions and skills allowed, irrespective of other factors.

31. Israeli women were active in the political arena at all levels. In Israel's parliament, where they had created a cross-party pro-women's rights synergy exceeding their actual number, considerable attention had been given to women's issues in the previous decade, resulting in the passage of numerous laws and further improving gender equality. One recent law made it mandatory for the Israeli Government to include women in any group assigned to peacebuilding negotiations and conflict resolution. Moreover, at the seminars it had sponsored to open dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian women, 50 per cent of the participants were Palestinian women.

32. Israel's commitment to the advancement of women extended beyond borders throughout the region and the world, often in cooperation with the United Nations and other international bodies. It had provided

training courses over the previous decade for hundreds of women throughout the world, emphasizing the role of women in development and entrepreneurship. It was also particularly active at the international level, recently hosting for instance an international conference for women leaders whose recommendations on gender issues within the Millennium Goals it proposed to bring to the attention of the High-level Dialogue of the General Assembly in June 2006. She stressed, in conclusion, that for her country the advancement of women was an ongoing effort of which it was proud and to which it remained committed, as it was to safeguarding the equality of all citizens.

33. **Ms. Aljenaibi** (United Arab Emirates) said that the United Arab Emirates attached great importance to the implementation of the recommendations and outcomes of all conferences on the advancement of women, particularly the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Realizing that the implementation of such recommendations was vital to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the Government had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2004 and had become a party to nine international treaties on work and equal wages for women.

34. Her delegation wished to emphasize that relations between men and women in the United Arab Emirates were governed by Islamic precepts and inherited customs, which prohibited all forms of violence against women. The Government had adopted many laws protecting women against exploitation and imposing severe punishments for all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. The Constitution recognized equality between the sexes in all rights and responsibilities, including the right to work, social security, education, health and social services. Furthermore, the Government had recently taken legal measures to allow children of widows and women divorced from non-nationals to be naturalized through their mother.

35. The United Arab Emirates had established six national mechanisms for the advancement of women [illegible] implementation of the recommendations of the relevant international conferences and summits. Achievements included: high female enrolment in schools; substantially improved maternity care; higher participation of women in the workforce; and increased investment opportunities.

36. The United Arab Emirates had also contributed to the advancement of women in a number of developing countries affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts by providing financial assistance and by assisting in the implementation of social development programmes.

37. Finally, with respect to the occupied Palestinian territories and Palestinian women in particular, the United Arab Emirates called upon the international community to compel Israel to respect the relevant international humanitarian laws, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention on the treatment of civilians.

38. **Ms. Bahemuka** (Kenya) said that her Government welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", and supported the recommendations contained in part III.

39. The Government attached due importance to gender equality and had adopted a national policy on gender and development in 2000 to facilitate gender mainstreaming in all its policies, programmes and laws. The Government had begun to implement affirmative action policies by lowering university admission requirements for female students and incorporating a provision in the draft Constitution that one third of parliamentary seats and the proposed district government should be held by women. Given that development depended on agriculture and small enterprises, the Government had created an enabling environment for access to credit and had put in place a legal framework to ensure equality in inheritance, land ownership and property rights. With respect to maternal health care and HIV/AIDS, the Government had launched a national reproductive health strategy for 1997-2010 and had adopted an HIV/AIDS strategic plan to reduce the rate of incidence among women and girls. Recognizing that education was a key factor in the empowerment of women, Kenya had enacted legislation to promote equal access to education and had introduced free primary education in 2003.

40. As part of its legal reform, the Government had written a draft Constitution aimed at protecting women against harmful traditional and cultural practices,

taking into account the principles of affirmative action, equal access to resources and equal citizenship rights. To enhance equal access to the law, especially for poor and vulnerable women, the Government had established family courts that were more sensitive to women and children and had decentralized the public trustee services to make them more accountable, particularly in the case of widowed women. Future projects included raising female enrolment in tertiary institutions and universities and increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in both the public and private sectors.

41. *Mr. Anshor (Indonesia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

42. **Ms. Sipraseuth** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that, although progress had been made in many areas, millions of women continued to live in poverty. To remedy the situation, the international community needed to focus on real and sustainable rural development and poverty eradication, especially in developing countries. The Lao Government itself was carrying out comprehensive economic and political reforms to address poverty, particularly in the rural areas.

43. With respect to gender equality, a women's union had been formed to promote greater access to education, health-care services, vocational training and employment. Women made a significant contribution to national development and occupied leadership positions at all levels. The Government had spared no effort to disseminate the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and had set up a national commission for the advancement of women to assist in formulating national policy and strategies. The commission was currently in the process of drafting a national strategy for the advancement of women for the period 2005-2010, which aimed to enhance women's participation in poverty eradication; promote education for women; improve health-care services; promote women to decision-making positions; and strengthen organizations that protected and promoted women.

44. **Ms. Feller** (Mexico) said that her delegation welcomed the renewed commitments in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Mexico firmly believed that, within the general context of the United Nations reform, Member States played a decisive role in defining the competencies, responsibilities and mandates of the different United Nations bodies involved in gender issues. Given the challenging agenda, coordination and cooperation among those bodies had become indispensable. As a member of the Consultative Committee of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Mexico had supported the development of specific projects favouring gender equality and the advancement of women. Mexico remained committed to the goals of the international instruments regarding women's rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, its Optional Protocol and the Convention of Belém do Pará, which was the only binding legal instrument on gender-based violence.

45. The Mexican Government would continue to investigate the murders in Ciudad Juárez within the framework of the Optional Protocol. The Government had supported the visit of two experts from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to Ciudad Juárez and had reported on the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations contained in the experts' report.

46. Millions of women continued to live in poverty, suffering the consequences of inadequate health care, lack of access to education and job opportunities, lower wages, discriminatory laws and physical or sexual violence. Because many were forced to migrate, they became potential victims of trafficking and labour exploitation. The international community had a moral obligation to help such women.

47. **Ms. Banzon** (Philippines) said that the Philippines had made considerable progress in promoting women's rights over the past decade. The Government had passed domestic laws against sexual harassment, rape, trafficking and domestic violence and had become a party to several international Conventions including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

48. Filipino women had begun to occupy a greater number of decision-making positions in the public and private sectors, including foreign affairs, budget and management, labour and the civil service. Mechanisms and instruments to improve gender mainstreaming in the Government had also been developed, including a policy whereby at least five per cent of budget allocations must be spent on gender and development programmes in all government agencies. Given that gender equality and women's empowerment could not be fully achieved until poverty was eradicated, the Government was making an effort to provide microfinance services to women, including entrepreneurial assistance and social safety nets.

49. At the international level, UNIFEM and INSTRAW should be accorded the appropriate status and supported with adequate resources. Also, given the immense impact of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Member States were urged to provide the CEDAW Committee with the necessary support.

50. **Mr. Aksen** (Turkey) said that his country had made significant progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the Beijing Plus Five commitments. The Government had recently established a legal framework for gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women and had adopted laws on basic education and the protection of the family, as well as new civil and penal codes.

51. Turkey attached great importance to combating violence against women and was pursuing a comprehensive legal and social strategy to curtail such violence. A research commission on honour killings had been set up and the relevant laws had been tightened. Turkey was looking forward to the timely submission of the report of the Secretary-General regarding the study on violence against women.

52. Turkey had been a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women since 1985 and had ratified the Optional Protocol in 2002. In 2005, the Government had submitted its combined fourth and fifth periodic reports to the Committee established under that Convention. Having noted the Committee's concluding comments, Turkey would continue its determined efforts to establish gender equality and prevent discrimination against women.

53. **Mr. Shaari bin Hassan** (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that in June 2004 the ASEAN foreign ministers had signed the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region. At the tenth ASEAN Summit, in November 2004, ASEAN leaders had considered further areas of action and cooperation on the advancement of women, including the development and implementation of a workplan to increase women's participation in politics and action to promote increased participation of women and young persons in the productive workforce and to reduce social risks faced by children, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities. They had also adopted the ASEAN Declaration against Trafficking in Persons, particularly Women and Children, which outlined measures that ASEAN members would undertake to address the issue. The third meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Women had focused on cooperation towards elimination of trafficking in persons and violence against women. At the subregional level, following the signing of the memorandum of understanding of the Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) in 2005, the six Greater Mekong subregion countries had agreed on a subregional plan of action against human trafficking.

54. The ASEAN Committee on Women was entrusted with the coordination and monitoring of cooperation in women's issues and concerns. Member States used the opportunity of Committee meetings to exchange views on their national experiences in addressing the critical areas of concern under the Beijing Platform for Action. The Committee also coordinated the implementation of the ASEAN Regional Programme on Women and Skills Training, formulated in 2000, and is in the process of preparing a workplan on women's advancement and gender equality. The fourth meeting of the Committee, which would be held in the Philippines in November 2005, would focus on economic and social empowerment of ASEAN women. To provide further guidance and direction to its work, the Committee proposed to establish an ASEAN ministerial meeting on women.

55. **Ms. Mahmood** (Bahrain) said that the advancement and empowerment of women were among the main objectives of the Millennium Development Goals and that Bahrain, like many other countries, had made efforts to ensure that women enjoyed the same

rights as men and worked as equal partners towards the goals of the national development strategy.

56. Although women in Bahrain had played a major role in many fields, such as teaching and nursing, during the twentieth century, it was only with the reform project, under the leadership of the King of Bahrain, beginning in 1999, that women had attained equal economic, social, cultural and other rights. On the occasion of International Women's Day in 2005, the King had launched the national strategy for the advancement of women, which guaranteed women's enjoyment of full political rights under the Constitution. The Supreme Council for Women worked to empower women and enable them to play their part, without discrimination, in public life and in national development. A prize was awarded every two years to ministries and to public and private bodies for outstanding contributions to the empowerment of Bahraini working women, the purpose being to encourage the training of women, their involvement in national development plans and their appointment to senior decision-making posts, as well as to encourage such bodies to respect the policy of non-discrimination against women.

57. The statistics indicated how much had been achieved in terms of the advancement of women in education, health, the economy and in social and political life. The illiteracy rate among women had fallen from 76.1 per cent in 1971 to 17 per cent in 2001 and there also had been reductions in the rate of infant mortality and a rise in the percentage of women in employment. Women currently exercised their political rights far more than previously: between 2001 and 2002 the proportion of women members of the Consultative Council had risen from 10 to 15 per cent. Women also participated far more than before as electors and constituted 10.1 per cent of all candidates for election to municipal councils and 4.3 per cent of candidates for election to the National Assembly.

58. Bahrain had thus made great strides towards implementing the Millennium Development Goals in respect of the empowerment of women and aspired to make further progress. The Government had chosen a Bahraini woman as its candidate for the Presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. Her election would be an important step towards giving women a leading role in the construction of a modern society, in keeping with the Millennium Declaration.

59. *Mr. Butagira (Uganda), Chairman, resumed the Chair.*

60. **Ms. Pi** (Uruguay) speaking on behalf of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and its associate member countries Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, reiterated the firm commitment of MERCOSUR to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), and the Millennium Development Goals. As recognized in the Copenhagen Declaration, social justice and equitable social development were essential for a process of sustainable development. Furthermore, equity and equality between women and men and the full participation of women in all fields, including decision-making, must be a fundamental element of economic and social development.

61. As MERCOSUR countries attached great importance to mainstreaming gender perspectives in public policies, a specialized body had been established within MERCOSUR where female ministers and relevant authorities could meet to debate issues concerning the promotion and protection of women's rights.

62. The Governments of MERCOSUR countries were also promoting public policies that guaranteed the full exercise of human rights to men and women. Priority areas for their public policies included, inter alia: combating domestic violence and its consequences; designing and implementing gender-based employment policies; and guaranteeing the full exercise of sexual and reproductive rights.

63. The MERCOSUR countries noted with deep satisfaction that the 2005 World Summit Outcome spoke of the need to put an end to impunity in order to protect women and girls from all forms of discrimination and violence.

64. In view of the feminization of HIV/AIDS, universal access to reproductive health was an essential step towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It was particularly important to help women and girls to protect themselves from the risk of infection through preventive education that promoted gender equality. Sexual and reproductive health programmes must be supported within the context of human rights, particularly those reproductive rights acknowledged

and reaffirmed by the international community, and individuals, particularly girls and women, must be the main recipients of the service provided. It was also crucially important to invest in the formal and informal education of young persons, including their sexual education.

65. The work being carried out for the advancement of women by non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies had generated change by bringing gender discrimination to public attention. All persons everywhere should have the same development opportunities. In that connection, the MERCOSUR countries welcomed and supported the recommendations formulated by the Secretary-General in documents A/60/165 and A/60/137.

66. **Mr. Chernenko** (Russian Federation) said that despite the evident progress made towards the achievement of gender equality, the international community still had to address a whole range of outstanding problems, inter alia: the feminization of poverty; the lack of effective operational mechanisms to achieve gender equality; the removal of gaps in legislation ensuring non-discrimination on the basis of gender; and the elimination of various forms of violence against women.

67. His Government fully shared the belief that gender equality was necessary to achieve sustainable social development and establish conditions for the full realization of human potential. To that end, the Russian Federation had put forward its candidature for re-election to the Commission on the Status of Women. Through its continued participation in the work of the Commission, the Russian Federation intended to promote a constructive dialogue among all interested countries and also take a balanced account of the interests of all regional States.

68. The Russian Federation attached considerable importance to dialogue with the international community on gender equality issues, as demonstrated by the visit to his country in 2004 by Ms. Ertürk, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

69. The Russian Federation was continuing to increase its international commitments to ensure gender equality and had become a full party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

70. The gender factor had acquired particular importance during the current implementation of major national reforms in the areas of social policy, administrative and governmental apparatus, and financial and budgetary relations. One of the steps taken in the course of those reforms had been the establishment of a governmental commission to promote equality between men and women.

71. **Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland) said that Iceland remained fully committed to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. All countries had a duty to continue their efforts towards implementing those commitments.

72. Iceland attached great importance to gender equality at the national and international levels. His country had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, and he urged States that had not yet done so to do the same. However, he expressed concern about the scope of the reservations that countries had made to the Convention. Such reservations were contrary to the objectives of the Convention and should be withdrawn.

73. His delegation welcomed the political declaration adopted at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and looked forward to the fiftieth anniversary of the Commission, which would provide an important opportunity to reflect on its achievements. It also supported the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which was an important instrument for the advancement of women and would require a fundamental change in procedure, delivery, attitudes and habits.

74. While progress had been made towards gender equality and the rights of women in the decade since the Beijing Conference, much more was still required. He therefore reiterated the issues of particular concern for his delegation, namely, violence against women, trafficking in women and girls, restrictions on the freedom of movement of women, women's lack of participation in political life, unequal pay and reproductive rights.

75. **Ms. Chenoweth** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that the work of FAO on gender equality was much more visible in Millennium Development Goal 1 than Goal 3 despite its active efforts to promote measures to

strengthen gender equality through access to food, natural resources, decision-making processes and employment opportunities.

76. For those truly interested in tackling gender inequality, poverty and food security, it was perhaps most important to address the unequal laws and practices related to land, property and inheritance rights. Globally, women owned very little agricultural land compared to men, despite their important contribution to agricultural production, and existing user rights did not give women the necessary decision-making control over land or allow them to invest and develop production. Overcoming such laws and practices would remove the basis of profound gender discrimination and greatly contribute to the alleviation of poverty and hunger.

77. Despite the important advances made in the decade since the Beijing Conference, gender issues had not been mainstreamed as much as they could have been. Little had changed in the rural areas of many developing countries and some gains had been lost owing to chronic poverty, poor governance, civil conflict and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Reality showed that without a determined effort and a strong political will, gender issues were simply not taken into consideration in policies, programmes and projects at the local, national and international levels. A systemic and holistic approach was therefore needed.

78. **Mr. Ndjonkou** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that ILO identified gender as an issue with a cross-cutting impact on all its programmes and activities. It also had a long-standing record of working to combat all forms of violence against women. The approach taken by ILO focused on: respect for international labour standards; the fine-tuning of national policies to prevent violence against women and combat trafficking in women; sustainable poverty reduction through improved access to decent work; and the elaboration and implementation of policies in the workplace to prevent employee assaults and discrimination in all its forms.

79. The report by ILO entitled "A Global Alliance against Forced Labour" had concluded that forced economic exploitation was evenly divided between both sexes in such sectors as agriculture, construction and brick-making but that forced sexual exploitation entrapped almost entirely women and girls. It had also identified poverty, gender and ethnicity as the key determinants of human trafficking. On a positive note, however, the report had argued that forced labour could be abolished if Governments and national institutions pursued active policies and vigorous enforcement measures.

80. The gender, poverty and employment programme of ILO argued that poverty could be traced to certain types and patterns of work as well as to exclusion from rights to and opportunities for decent work. ILO implemented a variety of programmes to improve the lives of women and girls in rural areas which focused on, inter alia: promoting the rights of women working in the agricultural sector; creating jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurship; providing training; and strengthening institutional capacity to deliver financial services to women. ILO also facilitated the implementation strategy by helping local, national and regional stakeholders to understand the linkages between gender, poverty and work; develop, implement and assess anti-poverty and employment policies and programmes; and integrate a gender and employment perspective into national and international agendas for poverty eradication.

81. As a member of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, ILO had contributed to the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, particularly in the identification and implementation of gender-sensitive employment and poverty eradication policies at national and international forums.

82. **Ms. von Lilien-Waldau** (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)) said that the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/60/165 rightly highlighted how improving the economic status of women could lead to a dramatic acceleration of rural development and the reduction of rural poverty. The report had also recommended that the topic should be afforded explicit attention in the context of the World Summit on the Information Society. For that reason, IFAD, together with the Government of Japan, had organized a side event during the Summit focusing on the economic empowerment of rural women.

83. The issue of rural women's economic empowerment had become increasingly central to the Fund's mission to enable the rural poor to overcome poverty. Rural poverty could not be overcome without leadership by women, full economic opportunities for women and an extended role for them in decision-

making. Advancements in women's economic positions improved their social status, brought benefits to their families and enhanced their role in community affairs. IFAD prioritized the economic empowerment of women as the primary means to improve their overall status and thus contribute to broad-based economic growth, poverty reduction and food security. Once women had secured access to resources and were able to take advantage of economic opportunities they would have the capacity to become powerful agents of change. To that end, microfinance initiatives for women featured heavily in the Fund's portfolio as a means of increasing women's independent income-earning capacity.

84. The limitation of women's access to productive resources was attributable not only to legislation and constitutional rights but also to social perceptions of gender roles. Women's ownership and control of productive assets must therefore be seen both as a right and as an economic necessity.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

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Chairman:	Mr. Butagira	(Uganda)
later:	Ms. Carvalho (Vice-Chairman)	(Portugal)
later:	Mr. Butagira (Chairman)	(Uganda)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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05-54560 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 64: Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/60/38, A/60/62-E/2005/10, A/60/79, 111, 137 and Corr.1, 165, 206, 211, 274, 281, 371 and 372)

Agenda item 65: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (*continued*) (A/60/170, 111, 211 and 371)

1. **Ms. Asmady** (Indonesia) said that Indonesia's latest report under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women covered a period of considerable change, from December 1995 to December 2003.

2. Indonesia's continued focus was poverty among women. Its national strategy in that regard pursued economic empowerment of women through income-generating activities made possible by micro-credit, upgrading of technology, development of skills and the availability of social safety nets. Tackling poverty must not be interpreted as a philanthropic activity, but rather as one which helped women to build capacities and self-esteem. To improve gender equality and justice at national, provincial and municipal levels, the Government had revised the law on decentralization, forcing local authorities to integrate gender issues into every stage of development.

3. Indonesia supported the conclusions and recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women (A/60/137), which examined the issue of women migrant workers, and urged all States to adopt prevention measures, including awareness-raising initiatives to educate women migrants about their rights. States must provide support in the form of shelters, legal aid and medical, psychological, social and economic assistance. National legislation had been enacted to prevent domestic violence and trafficking in women and children.

4. Gender mainstreaming throughout national and United Nations core policies must continue in order to further women's rights. Indonesia welcomed the inclusion, in the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit, of reference to women's important role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and in peacebuilding.

5. **Ms. Otani** (Japan) said that the power of nature had made itself felt since the beginning of 2005 through the Indian Ocean tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, the earthquake in Southern Asia and Tropical Storm Stan in Central America. As part of the international response to those disasters, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had worked to improve the role of women in the reconstruction effort, supporting leadership by local women, mobilizing women's networks, helping to revive women's livelihoods and ensuring that women were protected. When contributing to the United Nations post-tsunami flash appeal and in subsequent disaster-reduction debates, Japan had emphasized the gender perspective.

6. The role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction had been increasingly recognized, and had been highlighted in the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit. Though women had been in the forefront of urging an end to conflict, they had been on the margins of official peace and reconstruction processes. With women playing a central role in maintaining and promoting peace and security, those processes must take account of their needs, especially in the case of female refugees and internally displaced persons.

7. Japan was working on mainstreaming gender considerations into its official development assistance. At national level, it would aim to have women in at least 30 per cent of leadership positions in all sectors of society by 2020. The Government also wished to ensure that men and boys played a role in ensuring equal employment opportunities and the ability to balance a career with family life. The path to gender equality was one which men and women must walk together.

8. **Ms. Laohaphan** (Thailand) said that women remained trapped in poverty and were still frequent victims of HIV/AIDS, armed conflict and domestic violence. While the feminization of poverty was a familiar issue, the feminine face of HIV/AIDS was emerging: more women and girls than men were being infected. One cause was limited access to education. Women also suffered from limited access to economic and natural resources and a low level of participation

and representation in political, social and economic life, leading to a failure to fulfil and profit from their potential. Recognizing that only 10 per cent of government positions were filled by women, the Thai cabinet had taken steps to encourage appointment of women to posts in national and local politics.

9. Thailand was in the process of enacting a law to prevent domestic violence, and had established family development centres to address that issue at community level. It planned to triple the number of such centres — currently 2,000 — by 2008. Also established were one-stop crisis centres at hospitals, telephone hotlines, a police centre to protect women, young people and children, and temporary shelters. Men were being involved in efforts to combat violence against women. Thailand looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women (A/60/211), which would examine causes and remedies.

10. Thailand was also in the process of enacting a law to prevent and suppress human trafficking. It had set up a national committee with responsibility for formulating policies and countermeasures, and assisting, protecting and rehabilitating victims. The law would allow the use of money and property confiscated as a result of human-trafficking offences to establish a fund for prevention and assistance efforts. The Government was working with the Governments of the Mekong subregion, with which it had signed memorandums of understanding, and with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

11. **Mr. Jang** Hyun-cheol (Republic of Korea) said that the Heads of State gathered for the 2005 World Summit had reaffirmed the importance of women's role in establishing peace and security. The momentum provided by the Summit and by the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women must be exploited to promote the empowerment and advancement of women and the elimination of discrimination and violence against them.

12. On the basis of the Secretary-General's report on violence against women (A/60/211), his delegation hoped that the study to be presented to the General Assembly would contain data, policy recommendations and effective strategies for policy implementation. The Republic of Korea had established legislation and a comprehensive action plan against sexual and domestic violence, and aimed to improve public awareness of the seriousness and illegality of such violence. Legislation against trafficking of women for prostitution had also been put in place.

13. In 2005, the Republic of Korea had abolished the long-established family head system, an emblem of male-dominated society. It was thus in a position to withdraw its reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Women had acquired full equality with men in marital and family affairs, and could pass their surnames to their children. The Ministry of Gender Equality had been expanded and restructured, renamed the Ministry of Gender Equality and the Family, and given responsibility for family policies such as child-rearing and family health in addition to gender issues.

14. **Ms. Adjalova** (Azerbaijan) said that, because gender equality and the empowerment of women directly affected implementation of all aspects of the Millennium Declaration, including development, security and human rights, Azerbaijan had integrated those concerns as a cross-cutting issue into its development policy. It had made women's issues part of its first poverty-reduction strategy and its State programme on poverty reduction and sustainable development for 2006 to 2015. It was conducting a country gender assessment to identify and address key national concerns. Key indicators must be established to monitor the achievement of gender-policy objectives.

15. An important aim of the national development programmes was to establish appropriate sex-disaggregated data to explore the gender dimensions of poverty. Gaps still existed in such areas as the representation of women in political and economic life, violence against women, school attendance and numbers of women refugees and internally displaced persons. In connection with the *2005 Human Development Report*, Azerbaijan had embarked on a survey of gender attitudes to stimulate public debate and trigger policy action to ensure greater gender equality.

16. Physical, sexual and psychological violence against women and girls in the family, in the community and during armed conflict violated and impaired women's human rights. Azerbaijan looked forward to the Secretary-General's in-depth study of the phenomenon as a contribution to combating it. Increasing attention was focused on trafficking in

human beings, especially women and children. Azerbaijan had ratified the relevant international instruments, had adopted legislation and a national action plan, and was building an institutional framework to prevent trafficking, prosecute traffickers and protect and rehabilitate victims.

17. The situation of nearly 1 million people made refugees or internally displaced by the conflict with neighbouring Armenia was a continuing challenge for Azerbaijan. Displacement, poor economic and social conditions and psychological trauma affected women most of all. Azerbaijan welcomed the May 2005 field visit of the Executive Boards of the World Food Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations Children's Fund, and called for humanitarian and development programmes to take account of the needs and perspectives of women affected by armed conflict.

18. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) played a key role in promoting gender equality worldwide. Its status, technical leadership, organizational effectiveness and resource base must be improved, so that it could make a greater contribution to the United Nations system. Gender concerns must be addressed in the follow-up to all major United Nations conferences and summits.

19. **Mr. Badji** (Senegal) said that a greater number of women than men continued to suffer the disastrous consequences of poverty and illiteracy. Women were still victims of violence and lacked sexual and reproductive rights. In many countries, women were the first victims of HIV/AIDS. Millions of women continued to die during childbirth, particularly in rural Africa, where there was little access to medical assistance. Adequate access to primary health care must be a priority, and the United Nations must develop and enhance assistance programmes in that area.

20. Poverty reduction and sustainable development were not possible without gender parity. The link between women's advancement and economic growth and development must be taken into account in all socio-economic development strategies. Senegal had recently launched a 10-year national strategy to ensure gender equity, in line with benchmarks established under its poverty-reduction strategy and with the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, Senegal's goal of promoting gender equality in culture, the socio-economic realm, the judiciary and the political arena coincided with the objectives contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Senegal had established institutional mechanisms designed to promote gender equity and the social and economic empowerment of women, while remaining sensitive to cultural mores. His country called on the international community to carry out projects with women in the priority areas of health, nutrition, education and income-producing activities.

21. *Ms. Carvalho* (*Portugal*), *Vice-Chairman took the Chair.*

22. **Ms. Kumela** (Ethiopia) said that women in sub-Saharan Africa still lived under extreme poverty and faced discrimination. Maternal mortality was still excessively high in her part of the world. Access to education was low, in general, but much lower for women. Many discriminatory laws had been repealed and new laws that guaranteed equality had been promulgated, but their implementation and impact on the daily lives of women were still limited. Although various institutions for gender equality had been put in place, the lack of human and financial resources hindered their full operation. In her region, States were far behind in ensuring gender equality, and it was necessary to redouble efforts to include the women of sub-Saharan Africa in the prospering global village.

23. In Ethiopia, the percentage of women parliamentarians had recently grown rapidly, reaching one fifth, and the share of women in government had increased to one in ten, with women taking the position of State Minister in the previously male-dominated Ministries of Justice, as well as Mines and Energy. However, violence against women continued to be a major obstacle to the achievement of gender equality. Traditional harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, abduction and early marriage, characterized the lives of various peoples within Ethiopia. It was necessary to educate and sensitize women in particular, and society in general, about the rights of women. Education for women was vital for gender equality in Ethiopia. Moreover, the advancement of women in Ethiopia was intimately linked to the overall development of the country. Forty per cent of the population, the majority of whom were women, lived on less than one dollar per day. Poverty alleviation was essential to improve the status of women and could be pursued by increasing official development assistance

levels and cancelling debt to heavily indebted poor countries.

24. **Ms. Vikor** (Norway) said that it was time for the United Nations to turn its commitments into action, and her Government called for and supported critical and necessary efforts for gender mainstreaming within the Organization. Stressing that a gender perspective must be integrated into all strategies, programmes and activities designed to reach the Millennium Development Goals, she called on the Secretary-General to develop common indicators to track United Nations country teams' progress. She also requested concrete recommendations on how further to implement and integrate the gender perspective into debates and decision-making within the United Nations. It was crucial for the Organization itself to be a role model in securing balanced and fair representation at all levels. The current under-representation of women, particularly at the senior level, was a cause for concern. The position of Director of UNIFEM needed to be upgraded to the level of Assistant Secretary-General, which would ensure UNIFEM access to all relevant high-level meetings, committees and bodies.

25. Universal access to reproductive health for women and girls around the world was often a matter of life or death. The inclusion of that principle in the outcome of the 2005 World Summit was a major achievement. States must strive to position gender mainstreaming, HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health at the forefront of the development agenda, and should call on the United Nations to develop tangible targets and indicators to improve monitoring.

26. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had requested more annual meeting time to monitor effectively the implementation of the Convention, and her country urged Member States to approve that request. Furthermore, it was critical that States withdrew reservations that were contrary to the purposes of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. She called for universal ratification of the Convention, in line with the Secretary-General's appeal to turn the millennium commitments into action. In fact, the only way to achieve the Millennium Development Goals was through women's leadership and female empowerment.

27. **Ms. Tincopa** (Peru) said that since adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Peru had made significant progress in implementing objectives to promote the political, civil, social and economic rights of women, including their reproductive rights. It had reached consensus on policies and standards, created institutions, and seen improvement in social behaviour. There had been significant advances for women in education, health, employment, social and political participation, and in ending violence.

28. A law to foster education for rural children prohibited discrimination against girls for reasons of race, language and origin and had given girls the same access to literacy programmes as boys. Peru was committed to ensuring universal free access to health care, particularly in poverty-stricken areas. HIV/AIDS was a major public-health problem, and her Government had taken steps to reduce the price of medicine for people infected with the disease.

29. Peru had a zero-tolerance policy regarding violence against women, and its current national plan to combat violence against women focused on victims of domestic and sexual violence. Her country had created specific programmes to give women equal access to resources, employment, property, credit, markets and trade. The largest public-investment agency dedicated to poverty eradication in Peru had established a quota for mandatory participation of women in management positions in community projects. Peru had made progress in increasing women's involvement in the socio-political arena through national legislation, parliamentary, regional and municipal elections, and through a new law on political parties that guaranteed women 30 per cent of all political-candidate spots.

30. In poor rural areas of the Andean and Amazon regions, the Government had launched a campaign to provide women and children with identification documents as a first step to the full exercise of their rights. In closing, she emphasized the need to promote and protect the rights of migrants, particularly women and girls.

31. **Ms. Ciroma** (Nigeria) noted the need for concerted effort in getting more women involved in all aspects of human endeavour, in particular in the critical areas of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. As a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Discrimination against Women, Nigeria had taken steps to make it a legally binding instrument. At both federal and state levels, her Government had made concerted efforts to outlaw customary or traditional practices that were not only discriminatory but harmful to the physical and mental health of women and girls. The Government had also been working closely with non-governmental and faith-based organizations, as well as traditional rulers, to change long-held attitudes and perceptions about women and to inculcate in male youth respect for the fundamental rights of women and girls. School curricula and public-awareness campaigns had also focused on those objectives, as well as on the promotion of gender equality in all spheres.

32. At the regional level, Nigeria had ratified the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, which laid down a comprehensive legal framework. The cumulative effect of those initiatives was a significant increase in the literacy rate for women and girls, and in the number of women pursuing careers in male-dominated occupations. The country's national health policies and plans had also become more gender-sensitive and, in the case of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, had taken the special needs of women into consideration. As well, steps had been taken to reduce the rates of maternal mortality and morbidity.

33. Nigeria had made remarkable progress in implementing the Millennium Development Goals as they related to women. An increasing number of women were involved in politics and governance, and in decision-making in public- and private-sector ventures. However, gaps still existed in the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other international instruments for the advancement of women. Of particular concern were new, emerging forms of violence against women.

34. Economic empowerment of women, especially those in rural areas, remained a top priority for her Government. Seriously concerned about reports from United Nations agencies warning that extreme poverty, especially among women, had increased in the past 10 years in sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria called on its international development partners to complement national efforts at poverty alleviation.

35. **Ms. Intelmann** (Estonia), speaking on agenda item 65, said that women in many parts of the world still lacked the right to vote, participate in politics or express themselves on equal terms with men. Moreover, with social and economic inequality on the rise, certain phenomena — such as sexual exploitation and trafficking in women — had become even more widespread. The main achievement since the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women had been a breakthrough in public opinion on gender equality. Both the press and women's organizations had become more interested in the issue and women's understanding had changed, allowing them to make better decisions.

36. Turning to the Conference's impact on Estonia, she said that the most important step had been the adoption in 2004 of the Gender Equality Act, which explicitly prohibited direct and indirect discrimination and obliged authorities and employers to promote gender equality, thus strengthening the legal basis for promoting de jure and de facto gender equality in the country. Another important step had been the introduction in January 2004 of a parental benefit system, the aim of which was to compensate for the loss of income relating to the birth and raising of a child in the first year of its life.

37. Estonian NGOs had been particularly active in promoting gender equality outside Estonia. At the request of the countries concerned and in cooperation with her Government and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, training courses on democracy building, gender equality and gender mainstreaming had been held in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan in the past five years. The Round Table of Estonian Women's Organizations had also concluded a cooperation agreement with the Georgian Coalition of Women's Organizations.

38. The task of combating violence against women was as relevant and urgent today as it had been a decade ago. Violence against women was one of the main obstacles to achieving real equality. Women suffered from violence in private and public life, and women and children were likely to be victims of armed conflict. There was also an urgent need to intensify efforts to combat trafficking in women and girls, which was a particularly cynical form of violence. In that context, her Government strongly supported the

activities of the Nordic-Baltic Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings. The high-level conference entitled "Tackling Human Trafficking: Policy and Best Practice in Europe" which the Task Force, the European Commission and the United Kingdom, which currently held the European Union Presidency, would be hosting later in the month was an important step towards developing the most suitable policy and best practices against human trafficking in Europe.

39. Universal initiatives could be more effective if advanced at the regional level. Cooperation on combating violence against women in the Nordic-Baltic region had been intensive and fruitful, spawning numerous projects on various topics. Estonia had also hosted the third Baltic Sea Women's Conference "Women and Democracy". Awareness-raising campaigns, training courses for civil servants, and conferences and seminars for politicians, researchers and NGOs had also been organized in the region.

40. **Mr. Sin** Song Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation wished to draw attention to the issue of "comfort women", which needed to be resolved as early as possible. Two years earlier, an 82-year-old former "comfort woman" for the Japanese Army, no longer able to tolerate Japan describing such women as "prostitutes" and all their cases as "falsehood", had decided to speak out and travel abroad to identify the former camps where she had been forced to serve. Her call that history must not be erased reflected the outcries of the 200,000 women who had served as "comfort women" for the Japanese Army and was an appeal to the world conscience that such crimes must not be repeated.

41. There was no precedence in the history of war whereby a Government had organized the forcible draft, abduction and kidnapping of women from other countries, dragged them into battlefields and imposed on them collective sexual slavery to satisfy the lust of their soldiers. For that reason, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women had defined it as the crime of "military sexual slavery" and recommended that the Japanese Government should admit its legal responsibility, immediately apologize and officially compensate the victims, reflect the reality of history in educational curricula and punish criminals. However, despite the strong denunciation by Asian countries, the Japanese authorities denied the very existence of "comfort women", had deleted all references to them from their history books and openly visited the Yasukuni shrine where the criminals who had set up the system of "comfort women" were buried.

42. Today, Japan's distortion of history went so far as to openly justify, praise and fabricate history, beautifying its war against Asian countries as a "liberation war", war criminals as patriots and its colonial rule as a "contribution to development and civilization", and shamelessly arguing that it was not legally responsible for the "comfort women" issue. In addition, it was making territorial claims to sacred land belonging to its neighbours.

43. History was objective. It could not be changed by distortion or made to vanish by cover-up. Moreover, any country distorting history could not have a bright future, but would repeat the same mistakes. Given that such a dangerous country was geographically close to Korea, his Government could not just overlook Japan's manoeuvres for militarization. It was a mockery of humankind that Japan was attempting to occupy a permanent seat on the Security Council, given that it was a war criminal that had massacred millions of Asian people and was the only defeated country that had not faced up to its war crimes. If Japan really wanted to play a politico-military role commensurate with its economic power, it should compensate for the crimes that it had committed in the past.

44. **Mr. Buffa** (Paraguay) said that, in addition to celebrating progress made, it was important to recognize that many challenges still needed to be overcome before women would be able to enjoy equal opportunities and freely exercise their rights. For that reason, all the stakeholders and sectors concerned needed to step up their coordination and commitment, particularly in such areas as girls' school-enrolment rate, women's access to sexual and reproductive health, women's property and inheritance rights, discrimination in the workplace, the proportion of women in local government and national parliaments, and combating violence against women and girls.

45. Earlier in 2005, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had examined the third, fourth and fifth periodic reports of Paraguay, a process in which, despite budgetary difficulties, the Government had participated, reflecting the importance it attached to the advancement of women and to the Convention. In line with its commitment to implementing that instrument,

the national machinery for women had transmitted the Committee's final observations to State institutions, NGOs and parliamentary commissions. Paraguay had also set up an inter-institutional bureau to coordinate implementation of the Convention, which had begun by analysing the Committee's observations and identifying areas for action.

46. In order for women to participate on an equal footing with men, they must have access to education and health. For that reason, the national programme for equality of women in education had included the gender component in all levels of education, including the curriculum, educational materials and teacher training-programmes. The gap between women and men in terms of access to education and number of years of study was closing all the time. As part of the current national sexual and reproductive health plan, meanwhile, the Government had launched a "safe childbirth" programme that provided free care to pregnant women in public-health centres and hospitals throughout the country. It was also important to mention the feminization of HIV/AIDS. Inequalities in terms of access to information, education and health and women's economic dependency on men limited their ability to protect themselves from infection, which was often a result of the behaviour of their partner. It was therefore essential to mobilize women and men to confront the social norms that aggravated women's vulnerability.

47. There was no single, global solution to violence against women; multisectoral strategies were needed. Moreover, as pointed out in the Secretary-General's report (A/60/211, para. 13), the limitations or lack of data on the nature, prevalence and incidence of violence against women was a significant constraint to effective policymaking. At the national level, there was a need to create a single system for registering victims of violence. In recent years, justices of the peace had been responsible for receiving reports of violence and taking measures to protect the rights of victims and their families. Health centres and the police were also being trained in dealing with cases and referring them to the corresponding bodies. His delegation welcomed the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on violence against women migrant workers (A/60/137 and Corr.1), in particular the need to further explore the links between migration and trafficking and to address the two issues accordingly, with a particular focus on protecting women from all forms of violence (para. 76). Lastly, his delegation wished to reiterate its support for the revitalization of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

48. *Mr. Butagira (Uganda) resumed the Chair.*

49. **Ms. Seanedzu** (Ghana) said that Ghana had taken serious measures to improve the status of women and had raised awareness of gender issues and women's participation in national development. The new Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs reflected her Government's political will to give the highest consideration to gender disparity and create an enabling environment for the advancement of women. Women continued to play pivotal roles in their families and, even in households with male heads, often contributed significantly to household needs. The perception of gender roles in Ghanaian society was gradually changing; women's domains had expanded considerably into formal-sector professions and their public roles in political and civil organizations had increased. As education levels improved, parents had also become more receptive to the idea of education and professional training for girls. Progress had been achieved through greater resource allocation by the Government and donor agencies for training, technology transfer, credit support and health programmes that benefited women. To promote gender perspectives in legislation, the basic guarantees of equality were enshrined in the 1992 Constitution, which accorded specific articles to women's rights. The national machinery had been working with legislative bodies to review those aspects of Ghanaian legislation which hindered women's advancement.

50. For example, a domestic-violence bill was under active consideration for passage into law, a women and juvenile unit under the police service was helping to break the silence surrounding domestic violence, and law-enforcement agencies and judges were being trained on eliminating violence against women. Moreover, some harmful practices such as widowhood rights and female genital mutilation had been criminalized under the criminal code, while a parliamentary committee on gender had been established and a national gender policy developed. The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice was also mandated to ensure that girls' and women's human rights were not infringed upon, and the national machinery was working with the Ghana Labour Advisory Board to ensure that certain portions

of the new Labour Act were amended in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

51. In a bid to strengthen women's economic security, access to credit had improved with the introduction of the Government's microfinance schemes for women entrepreneurs. In addition, the national machinery had worked to incorporate gender concerns into Ghana's information and communication technology policy for integrated development, and had developed an assessment and planning tool for women's health and development for the United Nations *Human Development Report*. A wide range of NGOs and professional bodies had also adopted a gender and development approach in their work. Women were being urged to take high positions in organizations, while their political awareness had been intensified. At the subregional level, the national machinery had also revived inter-agency dialogue by maintaining regular interaction and communication on gender issues with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

52. In many developing countries, women were still a long way from achieving equal opportunities and traditional biases, poverty, cultural perceptions, social attitudes and women's health needs continued to limit their access to basic rights. The situation had been further compounded by globalization, which had intensified the inequalities confronting many women and hampered their opportunities. Ghana was convinced that the international community should pursue gender mainstreaming aggressively at all levels of society. The road map was within arm's reach. The onus was on the international community to uphold the objectives laid down in the Beijing Platform for Action and its review processes and formulate strategies to realize those ideals.

53. **Mr. Pham Hai Anh** (Viet Nam) said that, even though progress had been made, women were still victims of marginalization, discrimination and acts of violence. The potential of women as equal partners in joint efforts for peace and development needed to be recognized and used to the fullest, and efforts should be stepped up at all levels to promote gender equality and the advancement of women, and to eliminate discrimination and violence against women.

54. Viet Nam's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its commitments under the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration were mutually reinforcing and were being comprehensively implemented. Laws and regulations had been amended to incorporate a gender perspective; they included the law on land ownership, the law on marriage and the family, labour law and the law on the land-use transfer tax. The national strategy for the advancement of women had set targets in the areas of employment, education, health care, decision-making and capacity-building. To attain those targets, the Prime Minister had required all sectors and government agencies to implement the recommended measures and to employ gender mainstreaming in formulating and implementing national policies.

55. In Viet Nam, education was considered the foundation for the economic empowerment of women. Among the younger population, the proportion of literate women was almost equal to that of men. The same applied to student enrolment in high schools and universities. Special programmes in such areas as literacy and on-the-job training had also been established to benefit women.

56. The national strategy for the advancement of women aimed to raise women's share of the workforce and of newly created jobs each year to 50 per cent. Working women received special care during maternity and in retirement, and Viet Nam was one of the countries that allowed a longer period of maternity leave than the minimum stipulated by ILO. Improvements to the health-care system had greatly reduced the maternal mortality rate by increasing the number of deliveries attended by skilled medical staff, providing more prenatal care and vaccinating more women for tetanus.

57. Women's access to land and credit was equally important to their economic empowerment. To that end, legislation had been amended to require the names of both wife and husband to be shown on land-use certificates and joint-property certificates, thereby facilitating women's access to credit. As well, new credit policies greatly increased the number of loans to women, especially in rural areas. A plan of action had been established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, aimed at achieving social and economic equality of women and men through gender mainstreaming in all the Ministry's policies, programmes and plans.

58. As to the role of Vietnamese women in political life, the proportion of women representatives in the National Assembly had risen steadily to over one quarter. The proportion of women elected to local people's councils at all levels had also increased slightly. Women accounted for over one in ten ministers, as well as a number of other important posts, including the Vice-President who had just attended the 2005 World Summit.

59. Viet Nam's achievements were due to great efforts both by the Government, notably the National Committee for the Advancement of Women, and by women's organizations such as the Viet Nam Women's Union.

60. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) said that, since the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Morocco had been working on broad reforms aimed at strengthening women's independence, improving the status of women and eliminating discrimination. Women's affairs now fell under the new Department for Families, Children and Disabled Persons, and a number of focal points had been named in different departments across Morocco responsible for ensuring equality between men and women. As a result, women were playing a larger role in public affairs and decision-making at all levels and in all branches of government. In the 2002 elections, 35 women had been elected to Parliament, and there were two women ministers in the present Government. In January 2004, taking into account the King's expressed will that women should be integrated into modern life, Parliament had unanimously adopted the new Family Code laying down the principle of equality between men and women, with the aim of strengthening families, better guaranteeing women's equality, equity and fundamental rights, and preserving the higher interests of children while safeguarding human dignity. Under the Code, the Government had established family courts and instituted training programmes for officials.

61. In July 2005, the King had announced his decision to grant children the right to Moroccan nationality on the basis of their mother's nationality. Moreover, government proposals for legislative reform would strengthen provisions concerning violence against women. The new Labour Code would protect women against all physical and moral abuse, and the Penal Code would criminalize domestic violence, sexual harassment and any other kind of violence against women.

62. The status of women in Morocco had improved significantly since the 1990s, and the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had made it possible to institute legislative reforms and integrate a gender approach in all development policies. Those actions represented solid progress along the path of establishing equality, and reflected the Government's political will to establish a democratic, modern State governed by the rule of law, and to promote a culture of human rights in which the rights of women were a key component.

63. **Mr. Krishnamoorthy** (Sri Lanka) said that his country attached great importance to achieving equal access for women at all of decision-making levels and ensuring the full participation of women in the workforce in its efforts to eradicate poverty.

64. The Beijing Platform for Action continued to be the yardstick by which Sri Lanka measured gender balance and equality, and the country had strengthened its programmes in support of gender equality and women's development. The advancement of women should be considered not in isolation but in terms of the status of women in all aspects of life. Promoting gender equality and empowering women were an effective means of combating poverty, hunger and disease, and, in that context, all eight Millennium Development Goals were closely linked to women.

65. The development and welfare policies pursued by Sri Lanka since independence had ensured the country a high ranking in the United Nations Human Development Index. The country's female literacy rate was 97 per cent. University enrolment was high, with comparatively high rates of employment at executive levels. The high literacy rate had resulted in high standards of maternal and childcare. In the rural sector, community-based initiatives bore testimony to the visible empowerment of women. Sri Lanka had achieved zero gender disparity in implementing the Millennium Development Goals, and remained committed to fully implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

66. Increasing female participation in the workforce would not only strengthen the country's potential for growth but also reduce the number of poor as

households gained a second income. Men and women had to acknowledge each other's contribution in shouldering family responsibilities, and to improve their quality of life by properly balancing work and family. As the country modernized and its economy became increasingly internationalized, it was imperative that women should undertake remunerated work under equal conditions. Sri Lanka's concern was how to ensure that that was done fairly and harmoniously, to improve the quality of life for all.

67. **Mr. Takase** (Japan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply and referring to the statement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, said that, in regard to the issues of the past, the Prime Minister of Japan, Junichiro Koizumi, had on 15 August 2005 again elaborated the thinking of the Government of Japan on the matter. He wished to remind the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that, in the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks issued on 19 September 2005, both Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had committed themselves to taking steps to normalize their relations in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration. Prior to the Joint Statement, Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had held a number of bilateral discussions to reach that common understanding. Japan requested that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should also take sincere steps to address outstanding issues in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration.

68. He further wished to point out that the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had referred to some unsubstantiated numbers in an attempt to make a case, but that that could not be an excuse for the failure of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take sincere steps to address outstanding issues, in particular the abduction of Japanese nationals by agents of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

69. On the matter of the qualifications of a country for permanent membership of the Security Council, Japan firmly believed that such qualifications should be judged by that country's real contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security.

70. **Mr. Pak** Tok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was regrettable that Japan could not express its willingness to redress past crimes, and showed no political willingness on the issue. As for the so-called outstanding issues of the Pyongyang Declaration, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had done its best in regard to them and had informed Japan of the steps it had taken.

71. **Mr. Takase** (Japan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, quoted from the statement made on 15 August 2005 by the Prime Minister of Japan, to which he had previously made reference: "In the past, Japan, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly those of Asian nations. Sincerely facing these facts of history, I once again express my feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology, and also express the feelings of mourning for all victims, both at home and abroad, in the war. I am determined not to allow the lessons of that horrible war to erode, and to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world without ever again waging a war." He called once again on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take steps with respect to the outstanding items of the Pyongyang Declaration.

72. **Mr. Pak** Tok Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea wanted not words, but actions. It had often heard pledges, but wanted a sincere apology and practical redress.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 13 October 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Butagira ..... (Uganda)
later: Mr. Anshor (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Indonesia)
later: Mr. Butagira ..... (Uganda)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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05-55067 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 64: Advancement of women *(continued)* (A/60/38, A/60/62-E/2005/10, A/60/79, 111, 137 and Corr.1, 165, 206, 211, 274, 281, 371 and 372)

Agenda item 65: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" *(continued)* (A/60/111, 170, 231 and 371)

1. **Mr. Labbé** (Chile) said that regional cooperation had been central to the implementation of Chile's gender-related policies and commitments. His delegation fully supported the work of the United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), and stressed the need to ensure that the great variety of initiatives entrusted to those agencies received adequate funds. It was also essential to support the wide-ranging work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In that connection, his delegation supported the recommendation to extend the Committee's meetings so that progress could be made more quickly in achieving its complex objectives.

2. Women in Chile now made up over one third of the working population, and had access to decent employment, in line with the recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The entry of women into the workforce had been one of the main reasons for poverty reduction in the country.

3. Primary, secondary and higher education had become a fundamental basis for the integration of women into the global market. A primary concern must therefore be to expand and improve education, with a clear perspective on equal opportunities for men and women. Continuous training for women should also be encouraged in order to improve the adaptability of companies to the modern economy.

4. It was very important for the international community to participate in the preparatory work being undertaken on all forms of violence against women and his delegation supported the idea of examining the issue of violence against women at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. His Government had undertaken a series of initiatives to protect women against violence within the family and had recently eliminated loopholes in the law to that end. In that connection, the new Filiation Act put an end to laws which gave fewer rights to children born outside of wedlock, family courts had been established to examine all cases related to family conflicts and a new law had been promulgated on civil marriage. There had also been progress on legislation to help the victims of sexual violence.

5. Satisfactory levels had been reached in the area of maternal and infant health. Chile was implementing in-depth reforms which would allow women improved treatment against cervical cancer, breast cancer and HIV/AIDS treatment. Women in Chile also had increasing opportunities in the area of decision-making and political participation and representation. The Government had also made it a priority for women to have access to high-level positions.

6. **Ms. Sauerbrey** (United States of America) said that the United States aimed to improve the lives of women worldwide by implementing programmes that led to tangible results. The need for accelerated government responses to human trafficking had led the United States Congress to pass the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000. The Act assisted victims in the United States and abroad, enhanced federal criminal laws against traffickers, increased measures to prevent persons from being trafficked and mandated the Department of State to report annually on government actions to combat human trafficking. An act of 2003 strengthened the ability of national law to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish violent crimes against children, and provided severe penalties for Americans who travelled abroad to prey on sexually exploited and trafficked children.

7. At its latest session, the Commission on the Status of Women had adopted a United States-sponsored resolution to eliminate demand for trafficked women and girls, which was the first United Nations resolution focusing on how human trafficking was fuelled by demand. Moreover, the United States Senate had recently given its consent to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. She urged other countries to ratify the Convention in order to end modern-day slavery.

8. The Government had launched a new initiative to support women's justice and empowerment in Benin, Kenya, South Africa and Zambia. The three-year programme would help those countries to strengthen the capacities of their legal systems to protect women and punish violators by training police, prosecutors and judges to handle cases of sexual violence and abuse against women. It also aimed to increase awareness of the need for women's justice and empowerment through high-level engagement, conferences, public awareness and education.

9. The United States was committed to providing health care for women in developing countries. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief supported HIV/AIDS programmes in 123 countries worldwide, focusing on 15 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and South-East Asia that represented over half the world's cases of infection. Through the Plan, which contained an entire section on gender concerns, the United States had pledged over $2 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Plan integrated the significant work already accomplished under the President's international mother-to-child HIV prevention initiative. The United States was also addressing the loss of life in childbirth. To that end, it had held a panel on maternal mortality during the previous session of the General Assembly.

10. Most of the refugees, returnees and displaced persons assisted through United States contributions to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other organizations were women and children. Her Government strove to ensure that female refugees participated equitably in all areas of decision-making, food distribution and other humanitarian services, and that they were protected from rape and abuse. The United States provided life-sustaining services as well as assistance with income-generation projects for women, maternal and child health care, literacy training, and programmes to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

11. Her Government placed emphasis on advancing women's economic status, including their property and inheritance rights. At the latest session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the United States had introduced a draft resolution on the economic advancement of women, calling on Member States to undertake legislative, administrative and financial measures to create a strong enabling environment for all women entrepreneurs and workers.

12. A United States-sponsored resolution on women and political participation (General Assembly resolution 58/142) had suggested practical measures for Governments and civil society to facilitate women's political participation and empowerment. The United States had also organized a panel discussion in the Commission on the Status of Women on efforts to implement the resolution.

13. With regard to women in post-conflict situations, the United States-Afghan Women's Council promoted private-public partnerships between the institutions of both countries. The Council would shortly meet to discuss new programmes to support women's political participation, legal reforms, education, health care and economic empowerment. Furthermore, the Department of State's Iraqi-women's democracy initiative funded training programmes on political organization, leadership, entrepreneurial skills and media outreach. That initiative and the United States-Iraqi Women's Network had contributed to the large voter turnout, including many women voters, in Iraq's January 2005 democratic elections.

14. Her delegation hoped that the activities outlined might serve as examples of good practices for other nations engaged in similar efforts.

15. **Mr. Hemayetuddin** (Bangladesh) said that the advancement of women was a key component of his country's major policy thrusts. The Constitution guaranteed equal rights for men and women and allowed for the adoption of special measures in favour of women and children.

16. Bangladesh remained fully committed to implementing the objectives of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Immediately following the Beijing Conference, a national plan of action had been drawn up in line with the Declaration. A separate ministry had also been established solely devoted to the advancement of women.

17. No development goal could be achieved without mainstreaming gender and empowering women. To that end, gender dimensions had been reflected in his country's poverty-reduction strategy. Bangladesh also had a gender-sensitive budget, with the largest percentage allocated to education, particularly female education, which was free up to the twelfth grade. The World Bank had referred to Bangladesh as the pioneer in South Asia for narrowing gender disparities at the primary and secondary levels. His country had also

substantially reduced child mortality and improved maternal health.

18. Innovative ideas such as microcredit and informal education had been coupled with active governmental support to empower women in Bangladesh. Women were sufficiently empowered to act as major catalysts for development. Economic empowerment had also led women towards political empowerment: the country had over 13, 000 elected female representatives in local government.

19. Finally, he stressed that common objectives related to the advancement of women could only be achieved through partnerships across the broadest possible spectrum and provided that the relevant commitments and resolutions were fully implemented.

20. **Ms. Al-Jouiki** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the Millennium Development Goals would be unattainable as long as the goals of the Beijing Platform for Action remained unrealized. Gains in education, health and human rights of women had not been matched in the political and economic areas, especially in the developing countries. Greater international political will and more funding were needed to fight poverty, disease, the negative effects of globalization, war, and occupation, all of which discriminated against women both as women per se, and because women were in too weak a position to fight the many obstacles themselves.

21. Violence against women was a global problem that transcended the boundaries of nation, region, society, and class. Ending violence and discrimination against women required an environment that honoured religious, cultural and social diversity. Today's educated girl was tomorrow's knowledgeable woman, empowered to assert her equality with men. Her delegation could not overemphasize its concern for poverty and disease among women in sub-Saharan Africa. It also reminded the international community of the suffering caused among Palestinian women and girls who were deprived of water, food and medicine as a result of the Israeli occupation. Widespread trafficking in women and girls continued to be a stain on society, and needed to be stopped by pursuing the perpetrators, concluding bilateral and regional agreements and ratifying existing conventions.

22. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya renewed its commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which it had incorporated into its national policy. It had been among the first countries to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and in 2004 had acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention and also to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Libyan Penal Code had criminalized trafficking in or sale of women, and other legislative measures had been taken against traditional practices that discriminated against women. Women in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya were working, where condition, permitted, on an equal footing with men in professions that had previously been the preserve of men.

23. **Ms. Otiti** (Uganda), referring to the Millennium Development Goal concerning the empowerment of women, said that empowerment meant enabling people to control their future and influence decisions about development strategies. The Government of Uganda had set up machinery to that end, as well as taking measures at district level to promote equality of treatment for women in all areas of life. It was thus seeking to give women access to productive resources and improved access to labour markets, create a sustainable enabling environment for the use of information and communication technology, help them to become small-scale entrepreneurs and bridge the gender digital divide, particularly in rural areas. The Government was also funding programmes to reduce illiteracy among women, while civil society was also involved in the efforts to provide women with skills training.

24. As an agro-based economy, Uganda was especially concerned to mobilize and organize rural women for agricultural production, fish farming and record-keeping. Other action to alleviate poverty among women included the establishment of microcredit institutions and self-help schemes.

25. Discrimination on the basis of sex had been outlawed in Uganda, whose Constitution stipulated the right of all persons to equal pay for equal work. In addition, the Government was developing an equal-opportunity policy to ensure that women participated in and benefited from development initiatives on an equal footing with men.

26. The challenges remaining were the preponderance of men on the "information highway",

insufficient resources for the necessary programmes and measures for the empowerment of women; microlevel constraints to increased control by women of productive resources and returns from cash crops, due to unequal gender relations at all levels; the continuing ravages of HIV/AIDS; lack of childcare policies for working mothers; and absence of social-security coverage for women in the informal sector.

27. **Ms. Bethel** (Bahamas) said that, while the international community had consistently reaffirmed the indispensable role of gender equality and women's empowerment in achieving development goals, the necessary political will still needed to be mobilized. The Bahamas trusted that the outcomes of the 10-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2005 World Summit would provide fresh impetus to that end.

28. The Bahamas, for its part, had a strong record of political participation by women, with a consistently higher electoral turnout on the part of women than of men. Women there were also gaining increased access to decision-making, with rising proportions in elective office and an overwhelming majority in the highest positions in government agencies. She said that her country would not rest on its laurels but would continue to seek not only to meet but indeed surpass the quotas recommended in the Beijing Platform for Action.

29. The Bahamas remained committed to providing primary and secondary education for all its citizens and to protecting the health of its entire population, including women and girls, in particular against HIV/AIDS. Noteworthy in that respect were its awareness-raising campaign and its prevention, care and treatment programmes, offering free antiretroviral therapy for pregnant HIV-positive women. It also ensured universal access to reproductive health services, free of charge.

30. Moreover, the Government continued to review the Bahamian Constitution and legislation with a view to amendment as necessary. It would thereby seek to remove the final barrier to equality of participation and treatment for women in all areas of life, particularly the economic sphere, where their empowerment was perhaps the most important factor in their advancement.

31. She referred in conclusion to the need to protect women from violence, failing which all other advances were meaningless. The Government had taken steps to address that issue, on which it was also working closely with civil society.

32. **Ms. Molaroni** (San Marino) said her country had recently acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It had also set up a commission for gender equality and initiated action for the promotion of equal opportunity.

33. Women in San Marino had long had the right to vote and enjoyed equality of access to education, allowing them increasingly to participate in the country's decision-making. Furthermore, specific legal measures had been introduced to facilitate the integration of women into the world of work, including maternity support for working women, tax reductions for companies hiring women in particular sectors, and support for young women entrepreneurs. As a result and thanks to a favourable economic situation, significant numbers of women in San Marino had reached high positions in the private sector, public administration, the legal field, international relations and the media. She noted, however, that it had been more difficult to achieve comparable results in the political sphere, notwithstanding several women heads of State. In order to promote greater participation by women in all sectors of public life, a number of women's non-governmental organizations had been founded with the encouragement of the Government, which remained committed to pursuing its efforts to ensure full and comprehensive equality for the girls and women of San Marino.

34. **Mr. Tidjani** (Cameroon) referred to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as being, along with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the main benchmarks for the efforts of Governments and the international community to further the advancement of women. While welcoming the reaffirmation of all the relevant internationally agreed goals and recognizing that real advances had been made, he stressed that in many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, little progress had been achieved. He referred in that connection to the need to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS among young women and combat violence against women, which he said had been rightly described as one of the most serious violations of women's basic rights. The empowerment of women was also essential, especially in rural areas of Africa, where they played

an incalculable role in ensuring their families' subsistence and preserving the environment.

35. In Cameroon special efforts were being made to improve the living conditions of women, particularly through action in education, health care and the economy, supported by bilateral and multilateral partners. At the legal level, measures were constantly being taken to improve the status of women, through the incorporation into national legislation of the relevant provisions of international instruments. In human resource development, policy guidelines had been issued for the universal schooling of girls, training in information and communication technology, support for rural women, encouragement of women entrepreneurs and the organization of women's associations. In addition, women's participation in decision-making was growing and would continue to do so, with increased representation in Government, parliament, the State administration and universities, as well as in the higher ranks of the police force and the army.

36. As for violence against women, both legal and political measures had been taken to combat it in Cameroon, particularly through the new Penal Code, which punished it severely in all its forms. Awareness-raising campaigns were often organized in that connection, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund and in collaboration with women's grass-roots organizations, directed at all sectors of the population.

37. He concluded by calling for the support of the international community to meet the challenges still facing Cameroon in its efforts to improve the lot of women, particularly poverty, HIV/AIDS and the lack of specialists in gender issues.

38. **Ms. Singh** (Nepal) said that the Nepalese Government, subscribing to the view expressed at the 2005 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly that progress for women was progress for all, believed that women played a vital role in achieving sustainable development at all levels, and that international cooperation should be further strengthened to promote gender equality and eliminate gender discrimination.

39. Issues of particular importance to Nepal with regard to women included poverty, illiteracy, lack of access to economic resources, maternal health, trafficking for commercial and sexual exploitation, gender discrimination and violence, as well as lack of education and ignorance of women's rights. Women and girls in rural areas were also the most vulnerable victims of terrorism, which had obstructed development in recent years. The Government was nevertheless pressing on with its current five-year development plan, which sought to address all the challenges she had just mentioned. Development programmes for women were also being implemented, in partnership with civil society and non-governmental organizations.

40. In Nepal, women enjoyed equal rights under the Constitution, while their human rights had been improved through legislative measures over the years. They were able to participate more fully in decision-making through being allocated seats in local-government bodies and the national parliament. Moreover, it was hoped that elections to the House of Representatives, to be held in April 2007, would further increase the participation of women in the country's decision-making bodies.

41. Noting finally that Nepal was a party to several international human-rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, she called on the United Nations system to increase its technical assistance to Member States for their implementation.

42. *Mr. Anshor (Indonesia, Vice-Chairman), took the Chair.*

43. **Ms. Tawfiq** (Iraq) said that Iraqi women had borne more than their share of the recent troubles in Iraq and had faced them heroically, particularly in the political sphere. A quarter of candidates on most electoral lists in the recent elections had been women, nearly two thirds of eligible women had voted, nearly a third of National Assembly members were female, and six ministerial portfolios were held by women. Women had broken through into leadership positions in foreign missions and the police corps, and were active in civil society and political parties. Dozens of women's organizations and professional associations had been founded, which, in cooperation with women's organizations around the world, had acted as a platform for defence of women's rights.

44. The draft Iraqi constitution contained many passages guaranteeing women's rights with respect to citizenship, participation in public life, social protection, health care, and housing. The state of

women's rights reflected the state of society as a whole, and Iraq was in the process of revising its legislation to keep pace with social change. Iraq asked States and non-governmental women's rights organizations around the world to support their efforts to become a political, economic, social, and cultural force in their society.

45. **Mr.** Chng Tze **Chia** (Singapore), welcoming the informal interactive panel discussion on the role of women in peacebuilding, said that his delegation was particularly proud of the contribution being made by the Singaporean national Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of UNIFEM, to women's issues on a global scale. His Government counted among the recent key achievements in women's policies a bill passed in 2004 by Parliament allowing an overseas-born child to become a citizen of Singapore through his or her mother provided that she was Singaporean by birth, registration or descent. Further strides had been made when the Prime Minister had appointed three women to political office in August 2004. Women held such key portfolios as finance and transport, community development and youth and sports.

46. Men and women had the right to equal remuneration and equal treatment in respect of work of equal value. Following the ratification of the International Labour Organization Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (Convention No. 100), his Government and national trade unions affirmed their commitment to incorporate the principles of the Convention into future collective agreements. His Government had also equalized medical benefits for both men and women civil servants with a few to greater sharing of responsibilities between married couples.

47. Singapore had announced in 2004 a new package of measures to boost the fertility rate and support parenthood which took a holistic approach to helping both mothers and fathers to raise children, including longer maternity leave and childcare leave for both mother and father respectively. The measures would enable parents to strike a better balance between work and family life and ease overall financial burdens on the family.

48. In an attempt to maximize its human talent, his Government had repealed a quota on enrolment of women medical students so that men and women currently had an equal opportunity to study medicine at the National University of Singapore based on individual merit. His Government would continue to implement new policies that would bring better benefits to men and women alike and work to advance Singaporean women through regular dialogue with businesses and civil society.

49. **Ms. Bruell-Melchior** (Monaco) said that her Government had made the necessary amendments to its national legislation to bring it into conformity with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Monaco had long been involved in the promotion of women's rights. Monegasque women enjoyed social protection which sought to reconcile their profession and family obligations through maternity leave, family allowances and other benefits. Special attention had been paid to the needs of young women with disabilities at home and in the workplace. Her Government was also making efforts to ensure that older women, particularly those living alone, might continue to live at home if they wished to do so. They enjoyed such services as home-delivered meals and emergency hotlines.

50. The foregoing measures contributed to the advancement of women, who were engaged at the highest levels of government and civil society in Monaco. With respect to implementation of resolution 49/8 of the Commission on the Status of Women, Monegasque women constituted the majority of workers in the financial, trade, communications and other sectors.

51. Although Monaco had a very limited agricultural sector, her Government was making efforts to promote the advancement of women in rural areas through its official development assistance to Africa, including support for cooperatives and for education and protection programmes for out-of-school children. With a view to developing education for all and promoting gender equality and the advancement of women in Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, her Government had extended microcredits to some villages, built schools and established a workshop to employ young women with disabilities.

52. The Heads of State who had attended the 2005 World Summit had clearly shown the correlation between development and the role of women on one hand and between development and peace on the other.

53. Her delegation supported the conclusions of the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women (A/60/211), and looked forward to his report on the elimination of exploitation and sexual abuse in peacekeeping operations. Particular attention should be drawn to the new forms of violence to which women were subjected. Monaco also wished to join the sponsors of the draft resolution entitled "In-depth study on all forms of violence against women". Her delegation commended General Assembly resolution 59/300 on a comprehensive review of a strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and eagerly awaited the Secretary-General's progress report on that issue.

54. Her delegation was also encouraged by the efforts of the Organization to promote gender equality within the framework of human resources management and noted with satisfaction the handling of that issue during the 2005 General Assembly High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS with respect to progress made in the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.

55. Lastly, as a party to the Convention, Monaco noted the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/60/38) and the proposals to enhance its working methods.

56. **Ms. Oubida** (Burkina Faso) said that, as social and economic development was not possible without the full participation of women in society, her Government had established a fully-fledged ministry for the advancement of women to address, inter alia, several critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, including poverty, education, training, health, violence against women and girls. Policies and legislative measures to address those priorities had been elaborated with a view to ending discrimination and promoting the advancement of women. Her Government had also ratified international and regional conventions on women, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and had submitted its combined fourth and fifth periodic reports under the Convention in 2004.

57. Burkina Faso was preparing to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention, as well as the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and People's Rights. It had also adopted legislation to legalize wife inheritance and to prohibit violence against women, non-symbolic dowries, forced marriage and genital mutilation, and had made progress in its campaign against such practices. Burkina Faso's poverty reduction strategy also placed particular emphasis on gender equality.

58. Women were still poorly represented in public office but made up a large share of the informal sector. The National Employment Agency had been restructured, however, to allow for new training institutions aimed at making women more competitive on the job market, in particular in the area of clothing and beauty care.

59. Education and training of women and girls not attending school was another priority for her Government. Informal basic-education centres had increased their enrolment and the literacy rate had grown dramatically, including the rate for women. Concerning formal education, her Government had developed innovative ways to increase the enrolment of girls, including a positive discrimination policy which granted scholarships to all girls who passed their secondary-school entrance examinations. The enrolment rate for girls had steadily increased since 2003 and the gap between the rates for girls and boys had been closed entirely in some regions.

60. Access to basic health care, particularly for women, was another major priority. Efforts had been made to provide clinics with qualified medical personnel, access to modern contraceptive methods and other means of promoting reproductive health and family planning. Despite those efforts, health threats persisted, such as the increasing vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS and maternal mortality, which was among the highest in the world owing to poor nutrition, numerous pregnancies and insufficient prenatal care.

61. The review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session clearly showed that gender equality and recognition of the rights of women were indispensable for the achievement of real development and peace.

62. *Mr. Butagira (Uganda) resumed the Chair.*

63. **Mr. Alaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that many of the remaining challenges to promotion of women's empowerment programmes stemmed from globalization, which affected employment and poverty-

eradication goals in developing countries in many ways. Globalization had brought significant opportunities as well as difficulties. Access to new forms of technology and trade opportunities had contributed to the social and economic advancement of women. Many women continued to suffer, however, from poverty, poor working conditions and job insecurity. Women who left their countries in search of work and a better life were often at risk of extreme abuse by traffickers.

64. The goals outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action required a balanced and comprehensive approach. The elimination of poverty could create an environment in which to combat violence against women. The elimination of violence and discrimination against women, in turn, could help to empower women in all spheres, including their economic rights and right to development.

65. His Government's concern for improving the status of Iranian women and expanding their roles in the economic and social development of the country was guided by the principles outlined in the Iranian Constitution and set forth in the Platform for Action and follow-up processes. Women's poverty eradication was among the highest priorities of his Government and was one of the main objectives of the national development plan. Indicators on women's literacy, education, vocational training and employment showed that his Government had made progress in achieving its 20-year vision. The Islamic Republic of Iran would continue the process of empowering women, which was an integral part of its national development strategy.

66. **Ms. Al-Mahmood** (Qatar) said that the initiatives of Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al-Misnad, President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and wife of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar, had done much to narrow the gender gap in education. In particular, the establishment of an "Education City" outside Doha had opened new educational vistas for women. Qatar was trying to expand the role of women in all sectors of the economy by tying the educational track to the professional track. There was an increasing number of women in power and decision-making positions, such as the Minister of Education, the Vice-President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs and the President of the National Health Authority. The political leadership had also been devoting attention to greater women's participation in the democratic process in the wake of the first elections conducted under the new Constitution.

67. Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al-Misnad had also founded the Qatar Foundation for the Protection of Children and Women, as well as the Family Counselling Centre, which provided programmes for economically disadvantaged women.

68. Although the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action had been an important step, poverty, disease and violence continued to prevent women from participating fully in development. While the Division for the Advancement of Women, of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, had achieved many gains, more international cooperation was needed to implement the Beijing Platform, especially with regard to mobilization of resources, finance mechanisms and technical cooperation for developing countries.

69. **Mr. Pekarchuk** (Ukraine), aligning his delegation with the statement made by the European Union, said that the anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Declaration issued by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-ninth session showed that many countries had made significant efforts towards the advancement of women in the past decade. Ukraine reaffirmed its commitment to the obligations set forth in those documents.

70. Women continued to face many obstacles, however, including violence, trafficking and the spread of HIV/AIDS. His delegation welcomed the efforts made by the Economic and Social Council and Security Council to combat various forms of exploitation and violence as well as the inclusion in the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit of the provisions suggested by Ukraine concerning human trafficking. The international community must, however, redouble its efforts to protect women and children in armed conflict.

71. The Convention and its Optional Protocol continued to play a principal role in the advancement and promotion of the rights of women, and his delegation was making every effort to fulfil its reporting obligations. The promotion of gender equality was a priority of his Government. It was also a means of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

72. His Government had taken a proactive approach to the promotion of gender equality and had given particular attention to raising awareness about human trafficking. It was gradually incorporating the objectives of the Platform for Action into its national plan to improve the status of women. Furthermore, legislation had been adopted guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities for men and women.

73. Lastly, he said that Ukraine would be hosting the thirty-first session of the general assembly of the International Council of Women in Kyiv in 2006. The international event would give fresh impetus to the achievement of gender equality.

74. **Ms. Núñez de Odremán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that Venezuela, as a party to the Convention, had submitted all the required periodic reports. Venezuela reaffirmed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the Declaration issued by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-ninth session.

75. Women played a fundamental role in the country's economic and social development. A gender perspective had been included in the Constitution and in labour and land laws, and a national plan for women's equality of opportunity had been adopted. Various institutions had been established to deal with women's rights, including a national institute for women which participated in elaborating public policies on health, education, employment and legal services. A development bank for women had been created to facilitate access to microcredit and to provide technical assistance in setting up a business. In education, an equal number of boys and girls were enrolled in schools, and access to free education at all levels was available to both men and women.

76. A law on violence against women and the family and a related plan of action helped to coordinate action to prevent and punish such violence. The plan included a national emergency hotline and shelters for women in imminent danger.

77. The number of women in senior government positions had increased significantly and attempts were being made to include a gender perspective in national statistics. Other achievements included the adoption of a law protecting women's reproductive rights and the development of a national programme on sexual and reproductive health which established policies on prevention and care and offered free treatment to persons suffering from AIDS, especially women and children.

78. Her delegation wished to draw attention to the work accomplished by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), which had made invaluable contributions to the advancement of women in developing countries.

79. The Government condemned the trafficking of women and children and had ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two Protocols. Venezuela rejected the use of unilateral coercive measures as instruments of political or economic pressure, as such measures violated the Charter and hindered the economic and social development of women and children in particular.

80. **Mr. Husain** (Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)) said that the national policies and development efforts of his organization's member States were aimed at attaining equality before the law and in all aspects of social and economic life. Any anomalies found in national legislations were due to the deterioration of social values and were currently being identified and addressed.

81. With respect to the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women (A/60/211), OIC was pleased to note those paragraphs that addressed women's needs in terms of national legislation and standards. However, much remained to be done in terms of implementation. His delegation wished to point out that Islam did not tolerate violence of any kind and that the proposed measures to criminalize violence against women were fully consistent with Islamic teachings. OIC remained interested in the study being undertaken by the Secretariat on the different forms of violence against women, particularly those mentioned in paragraph 23 of the report, and reiterated its willingness to cooperate on the study and participate in the experts' meetings.

82. With regard to the negative impact of globalization, it was evident that the increasing mobility of women exposed them to the dangers of exploitation, abuse and other injustices. The problem of female mobility needed to be taken into account in national, regional and global economic planning, so that the interests of women and their families were safeguarded.

83. At its latest session, the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers had reaffirmed its intention to convene a ministerial conference on women to develop an action plan enhancing the role of women in the development of Muslim societies and to create greater opportunities for women in all walks of life.

84. His organization remained committed to cooperating with the United Nations in its efforts to move closer to a family-oriented, harmonious and progressive global village, as envisioned in the Millennium Development Goals.

85. **Mr. Motter** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) said that the issue of gender equality had long been one of his organization's priorities. It had contributed to all the world conferences on women, placing emphasis on parliamentary action and follow-up, and had adopted a resolution on gender equality on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the 1995 Beijing Conference.

86. To ensure respect for women's rights, it was necessary to increase the number of female parliamentarians and enhance the capacity of parliaments to address gender issues. During the parliamentary forum organized by IPU and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women at the United Nations in March 2005, parliamentarians had concluded that, in addition to raising quotas, it was necessary to change mentalities, enhance women's capacities and provide financial support to female candidates. It was also clear that increasing women's participation in politics would require a much larger framework of rights and more results in the fight against poverty, HIV/AIDS and all forms of violence.

87. With regard to the capacity of parliaments to address gender issues, the parliamentarians had recommended the establishment of parliamentary committees on gender equality and the development of an environment that supported female parliamentarians, with gender-sensitive rules and codes of conduct and family-friendly working hours.

88. Aware of the challenges faced by women running for election, IPU had organized a training seminar, in cooperation with the Supreme Council for Women of Bahrain and with the support of the British Embassy, for female candidates in the upcoming 2006 elections in Bahrain. The seminar had aimed to provide female candidates with an overall picture of their role as future representatives, focusing on ways to carry out an electoral campaign and on the unique challenges faced by female candidates in a political environment traditionally dominated by men. Furthermore, together with the legislative assembly of El Salvador and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), IPU had also organized a regional seminar where Latin American parliamentarians had debated ways to strengthen their role in the budgetary process and develop gender-sensitive budgets.

89. IPU was expecting 170 female parliamentarians to attend its upcoming assembly, which represented one third of the total number of participants. The organization's work and priorities had changed with the growing presence of women and it was hoped that IPU would be able to achieve the same change in parliaments worldwide.

90. **Ms. Kekeh** (World Bank) said that achieving gender equality was integral to achieving the Millennium Development Goals as a whole. Although significant progress had been made since the Beijing Conference, women continued to face multiple barriers in attaining equal access to rights and resources. The target of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary schools by 2005 had not been reached and unemployment rates remained higher among women than among men. Poverty and lack of growth only exacerbated gender disparities; unequal access to education and health care was more acute among the poor.

91. One of the future challenges facing the World Bank was to assist countries in increasing women's access to economic opportunities. To that end, it had developed a gender initiative which identified and disseminated important gender-related issues to be taken into account by policymakers when weighing the costs and benefits of economic reforms. In countries such as Viet Nam and Tajikistan, the World Bank was already helping women enhance their participation in the private sector by providing them with credit, improving their access to information, building capacities and providing job-skills training.

92. With respect to women and conflict, it was noted that gender inequality exacerbated the non-monetary aspects of poverty such as lack of opportunity, empowerment and security, particularly during post-conflict periods. Women were often excluded from contributing to the formal peace process because they were not members of political institutions; yet, their

participation was essential to ensure the incorporation of gender issues into peace agreements. The World Bank recognized that women made important contributions to peace through women's civil-society organizations, and had recently supported a project on community empowerment and local governance in Timor-Leste that incorporated an equal male-female ratio for elected village representatives. In collaboration with over 40 partners, the World Bank was also implementing a demobilization and reintegration programme in the greater Great Lakes region of Africa which recognized the special needs of female and child ex-combatants.

93. With just 10 years left to reach the Millennium Development Goals, additional efforts were needed to mainstream gender in all areas of work, particularly economic growth, labour-market reforms and post-conflict reconstruction. The World Bank remained committed to continuing its partnership with United Nations agencies, other donor partners and Governments to achieve the agenda set forth in the Millennium Development Goals and the Beijing Platform for Action.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/60/SR.14

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Chairman: Mr. Butagira ..... (Uganda)
later: Ms. Tomić (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Slovenia)

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* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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05-55073 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice *(continued)*

Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.8: Strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity

1. **Mr. Cavallari** (Italy) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and also Albania, Andorra, Australia, Panama and San Marino. The draft resolution was being submitted in response to the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) and the Secretary-General's report on strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity (A/60/131). A number of updates and new elements had been incorporated since the previous year's resolution, in particular references to the status of international legal instruments on transnational organized crime, the outcome of the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and important regional developments such as the round-table meeting entitled "Crime and Drugs as Impediments to Security and Development in Africa", hosted by the Government of Nigeria in 2005. A revised draft based on ongoing negotiations would be distributed soon.

2. **The Chairman** announced that the following countries had also joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Madagascar, Malawi, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Norway, Serbia and Montenegro, South Africa, the Sudan, Timor-Leste and Ukraine.

Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.10: United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

3. **Mrs. Muuondjo** (Namibia), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of African States, said that the text remained the same as that of the previous year's resolution, except for updating. The Group of African States welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the Institute (A/60/123), which indicated that the Institute was trying to step up its initiatives to assist the African continent in solving its problems caused by serious crime and underdevelopment, in cooperation with the African Union, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other mechanisms. In that regard, the Group of African States highly appreciated the General Assembly's continued support, especially the United Nations grant, which the Secretary-General had emphasized was vital for sustaining the Institute. The Group of African States was also grateful for the assistance of development partners, the private sector and civil society, which would help Africa enhance the establishment of monitoring mechanisms and the promotion of sustainable systems to combat crime, particularly transnational organized crime and terrorism. Such support enabled the Institute to carry out its mandate. She hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.11: Follow-up to the Eleventh United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

4. **Mrs. Laohaphan** (Thailand), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and also Bangladesh, Cameroon, Canada, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho and Sri Lanka, said that the Bangkok Declaration adopted by the Eleventh Congress could serve as a solid foundation for collective efforts to prevent and combat crime and strengthen the work of UNODC. Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.11 and the draft resolution on crime prevention and criminal justice introduced by Italy (A/C.3/60/L.8) could complement each other in covering all aspects of crime prevention. She looked forward to the support of all Member States in sponsoring the draft resolution and adopting it by consensus.

5. **The Chairman** announced that the following countries had also joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Belarus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiji, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal and Tunisia.

Agenda item 62: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family *(continued)*

Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.4: Cooperatives in social development

6. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.4, which contained no programme budget implications. The draft resolution had been orally revised by the representative of Mongolia at a previous meeting.

7. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary) announced that the following countries had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Guinea, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, South Africa, Switzerland, Timor-Leste and Tunisia.

8. **Ms. Enkhtsetseg** (Mongolia) announced that Bangladesh, Bolivia, Costa Rica, India and Panama had also joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

9. *Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.4, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.7: Follow-up to the implementation of the International Year of Volunteers

10. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.7, which contained no programme budget implications.

11. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary), after drawing the Committee's attention to the fact that Brazil had been omitted as a sponsor in the Spanish version of the text, announced that the following countries had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, China, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, South Africa, Timor-Leste, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

12. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil) announced that the following countries had also joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Bangladesh, Botswana, Canada, Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Viet Nam. He looked forward to the support of all delegations and hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

13. *Draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.7 was adopted.*

Agenda item 64: Advancement of women *(continued)* (A/60/38, A/60/62-E/2005/10, A/60/79, A/60/111, A/60/137, and Corr.1, A/60/165, A/60/206, A/60/211, A/60/274, A/60/281, A/60/371 and A/60/372)

Agenda item 65: Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" *(continued)* (A/60/111, A/60/170, A/60/211 and A/60/371)

14. **Mr. Ortega** (Ecuador) said that, for Ecuador, the Beijing Declaration was a key framework for the adoption of policies to promote and protect women's rights. Since 1995, his Government had made important progress on women's rights and gender equality, drawing up the first Equal Opportunities Plan (1996-2001), based on the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action, establishing the National Council for Women (CONAMU) as the national machinery responsible for shaping public policies with a gender approach and, lastly, formulating the second Equal Opportunities Plan (2004-2009). The 1998 Political Constitution, moreover, safeguarded women's rights, incorporated a gender approach and the protection of the specific human rights of women, and established a number of fundamental principles.

15. Gender equality was essential to combating poverty, hunger and disease and attaining sustainable development. However, even though the fundamental right to equality had been expressed on many occasions and in many forums, discrimination against women persisted in many countries around the world. In line with its international commitments, Ecuador had made important progress on the rights of Ecuadorian women and the institutionalization of policies that benefited

women and sought to achieve gender equality. In that context, his Government had issued the General Regulations of the Law to Combat Violence against Women and the Family, the Free Maternity Law, the Reform of the Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Law on Election Quotas, to name the most important. His Government was convinced that it was essential to strengthen the role of women in order to attain the country's social and economic development goals and therefore reiterated its commitment to promoting and protecting women's rights, eliminating discrimination and violence against women, and achieving full equality for women in all areas and at all levels.

16. **Ms. Kulzhanova** (Kazakhstan) said that the Beijing Conference had become a cornerstone of efforts to promote and protect the rights of women. Throughout the transition period, the Government of Kazakhstan had been demonstrating its commitment to gender equality and to the principles laid down in the fundamental documents on the advancement of women. Kazakhstan's National Commission for Family and Women, established in 1999, had been working to implement a national plan of action to strengthen the status of women, which was mandatory for all government agencies. In 2003, the Government had adopted a gender policy approach in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, aimed at ensuring equal distribution of powers and influence in society, equal obligations in the rearing of children and freedom from gender-based violence. A gender equality strategy for the years 2005-2015 was being developed in close cooperation with government departments and international and non-governmental organizations.

17. Maternal and child health, including the reduction of mortality, was a high priority. State programmes had been adopted for developing rural areas, which placed emphasis on social infrastructure. A gender perspective was being integrated into the formulation and budget planning process for all social programmes, in support of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Microcredit was clearly an effective tool for eliminating poverty, and Kazakhstan's efforts in that area fell within the framework of the International Year of Microcredit. Two thirds of microcredit beneficiaries in Kazakhstan were rural women. A State microcredit programme for the years 2005-2007 was being developed with approximately US$ 2 million in funding from the national budget; it was expected to create some 90,000 new jobs by 2007, including jobs for women.

18. Despite the country's great accomplishments in its efforts to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men, it still faced serious challenges. Women continued to be poorly represented at decision-making levels in government. Maternal mortality, though declining, was still high. The spread of HIV, especially among women, was a growing concern. While progress had been made in establishing a favourable regulatory environment, certain problems remained in providing services. The Government of Kazakhstan recognized those challenges and intended to continue its work in those areas, in close cooperation with the United Nations and with non-governmental organizations.

19. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil) said that his country enthusiastically reaffirmed the Beijing and Cairo outcome documents, which together with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other relevant human rights instruments, had provided invaluable guidance to the Brazilian Government in promoting the advancement of women. Brazil's National Plan of Policies for Women, adopted in December 2004, was largely the result of Brazilian society having discussed and internalized the guidelines set forth in those international instruments. It served to involve and commit states and municipalities, under the coordination of the Federal Government and its Secretariat on Women's Policy, which was responsible for mainstreaming gender policies across the full range of the Federal Government's activities. The Plan, which covered the period 2005-2007, had emerged from a series of consultations with civil society at local, regional and state conferences, culminating in the First National Conference on Policies for Women, convened by President Lula in July 2004 and bringing together nearly 2,000 delegates.

20. It covered four strategic areas of action. The first was the promotion of equality in the areas of labour and citizenship, including initiatives to extend women's access to the labour market and promote non-discriminatory labour relations as well as encourage entrepreneurship and extend women's access to land and housing. The second was the promotion of inclusive, non-sexist education, including the

incorporation of a gender, race, ethnic and sexual-orientation perspective in formal and informal education. The third area was health, sexual and reproductive rights for all women regardless of race, ethnicity or sexual orientation. The Government was committed to reducing maternal mortality by improving obstetric care and providing assistance for abortions, and was reviewing punitive legislation on the voluntary termination of pregnancy. Brazil was strongly committed to halting the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, in the female population. The fourth area was violence against women: Brazil was fully committed to reducing its incidence and was placing priority, inter alia, on promoting health-care services and preventive measures for women subject to domestic and sexual violence, and on expanding access to justice and legal aid.

21. Brazil would have wished to see the commitments contained in the 2005 World Summit Outcome with respect to gender equality, and specifically sexual and reproductive health rights, framed in much stronger language. In August 2005, ministers from MERCOSUR and associated countries, together with parliamentarians and civil-society representatives, had adopted the Brasilia Declaration, which clearly stated that universal access to sexual and reproductive health services was essential to promote economic growth and reduce social and economic inequality. The Declaration also highlighted the need for a human-rights-based approach to sexual and reproductive health services, including sex education. Brazil nevertheless recognized that the 2005 World Summit Outcome provided a minimum foundation in that area, and pledged to continue to devote its energies to the cause of gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights at the national and international levels.

22. **Ms. Rasheed** (Observer for Palestine) said that, while significant progress had been achieved in advancing equality, development and peace for women in many parts of the world, millions of women still lived in conditions that deprived them of their fundamental human rights. The conditions faced by Palestinian women were difficult and unique. It was disheartening that each year their situation continued to worsen, particularly with the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, over the past five years. Throughout that time, Israel, the occupying Power, had deliberately violated international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, bringing untold misery to the entire Palestinian population and particularly Palestinian women.

23. The countless human rights violations committed by the occupying forces had had grave and long-term consequences for Palestinian women and had compounded the pressures and constraints that already existed in regard to women's advancement. Palestinian women continued to fight inequality and discrimination in order to play an active and influential role in their society but, as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women had noted in February 2005, they faced two systems of subordination: occupation and patriarchy. The images were unforgettable and tragic: mothers mourning the loss of their loved ones, watching their homes bulldozed as their children fled in panic and fear only to find that there was nowhere to be safe, enduring innumerable indignities and harassment and witnessing as huge tracts of their land were swallowed up for the continued construction of Israel's monstrous wall and ever-expanding settlements that destroyed their property, their livelihood and the prospects for peace.

24. In addition, the increasing restrictions of movement imposed on Palestinians had gravely affected nearly every aspect of life in the occupied Palestinian territory, depriving the Palestinian people not only of their freedom of movement but also of other fundamental human rights including the right to work, to medical care and to education. The unlawful restrictions, which were imposed solely on Palestinians and not on the Israeli settlers living illegally throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, posed an additional threat to Palestinian women, who had to endure the horrifying fate of being forced to give birth at military checkpoints. As reported by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 61 Palestinian women had given birth at checkpoints between September 2000 and December 2004, resulting in the death of 36 newborns. Countless testimonies had been documented. Nothing, not even security concerns, could justify such inhumane, criminal acts. Without a doubt, such horrific incidents had resulted in widespread deterioration of the overall psychological state of Palestinian women.

25. Year after year, the Palestinian people continued to be plagued with more death and destruction and

further human rights violations. Nevertheless, an important juncture had been reached, which could constitute the beginning of the road to achieving peace. While there were many unresolved issues, the end of colonial settlement in one part of Palestinian land, the Gaza Strip — even though it represented only 6 per cent of the total land area of the occupied Palestinian territory — was a positive development. Palestine looked forward to real peace and the reversal of the colonization process of the entire occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, based on the 1949 armistice line. Only then would it be possible for genuine progress to be made towards the advancement of Palestinian women and for work to begin on securing a promising future for all the people of the region.

26. **Ms. Jouhargy** (Saudi Arabia) said that Saudi women enjoyed all their rights under the Islamic sharia, inlcluding the right to own and dispose of property and to receive an education. Over 2.3 million females were enrolled in different levels of education up to the post-graduate stage and many women occupied senior positions in Saudi universities. Saudi businesswomen owned approximately 30 per cent of liquid assets deposited in banks, and were very active in the commercial and economic sectors. Saudi Arabia had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and established a plan of action to combat violence against women. Its efforts to promote the advancement of women were consistent with the principles of Islam and the objective of ensuring women's effective participation in the development of Saudi society.

27. **Mr. Limon** (Suriname) said that his Government's policy was increasingly geared to creating opportunities for women in all sectors. One of its specific actions had been to formulate an Integral Gender Action Plan based on the Beijing Platform for Action and a CARICOM programme of action, to ensure that the drafting of policy was gender-balanced and gender-equitable. In collaboration with non-governmental organizations, the Government of Suriname had undertaken several initiatives to enhance the participation of women in all sectors of society. A successful campaign had been launched to increase the number of women in policy- and decision-making positions. Although women were still relatively underrepresented in top posts, significant strides had been made. Two women were currently serving as cabinet ministers, and a number of women were members of parliament.

28. The National Commission on Gender Legislation had been established to improve the legislative framework for the promotion and protection of women. It had submitted proposals to amend legislation that discriminated against women and had introduced new legislation to promote gender equality. Proposals to amend the Penal Code covered such areas as domestic violence, trafficking in persons and sexual harassment in the workplace, and were in accordance with both the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, which Suriname had ratified in 2001.

29. To address the feminization of poverty, Suriname had taken specific actions to improve prospects for women's employment. A joint initiative by the Foundation for Labour Mobilization and Development, a Government organization, and the National Women's Movement, a non-governmental organization, had created opportunities for women to acquire skills in non-traditional areas. Suriname also faced an increase in HIV/AIDS infections, especially among women and girls. A proposal to update the legal framework with respect to HIV/AIDS had been prepared, and in addition to the Government's efforts a number of non-governmental organizations were contributing to the fight against HIV/AIDS, with a special focus on young women.

30. **Mr. Hayassat** (Jordan) said that his Government continued its efforts to improve the status of women by amending legislation that discriminated against women, stepping up media campaigns to address negative attitudes and practices that hampered women's full participation in society, and revising educational curricula to take account of gender issues. In particular, it had amended its personal status laws, electoral laws and laws on political parties and increased women's representation in parliament and decision-making bodies at all levels. Efforts were being made to mainstream the gender perspective in all policies, programmes, plans and human resources functions in order to achieve full gender equality.

31. **Mr. Savua** (Fiji) said that women had great potential not only to improve their own living standards but also to contribute to nation-building, if

given the opportunity and the resources. Countries must not lose sight of the commitments embodied in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which had been reiterated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Some countries would require resources and technical expertise to help them implement internationally agreed conventions and national plans of action.

32. Fiji was encouraged by the growing international awareness of the female dimension of migration. With remittances becoming a prominent feature of the country's economy, Fiji had an economic as well as a social stake in making sure that its women remained safe wherever they went. Much had been made of Fiji's high participation in peacekeeping missions around the world, and the effects of driving men away from their families and placing them in dangerous situations; but women made up 52 per cent of the country's emigrants and were being subjected to violence of a different and unexpected kind when working abroad. Fiji supported the call for further studies by the United Nations at the national, regional and international levels aimed at gaining a better understanding of the dynamics of women in international migration so as to protect their rights and defend their persons in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

33. In regard to the sexual and reproductive health of women, Fiji had already achieved most of the goals established by the International Conference on Population and Development and was on track to achieve its Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Still, according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 20 per cent of the country's needs for family planning services were unmet. Moreover, adolescent fertility and abortion rates were high, and the incidence of sexually transmitted infections, particularly HIV/AIDS, was growing. Special thanks were due to the Global Fund, UNAIDS, Australia and New Zealand, which had provided much needed technical assistance and funding to help Fiji combat the rising rate of infection. Providing reproductive health services to rural areas remained difficult, especially given that the population was spread over an archipelago and progress was impeded by cultural factors such as gender inequality, early initiation to sex, taboos relating to sexuality and the drift of the population towards urban centres.

34. Fiji remained cognizant of the special plight of women in rural areas, and welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the issue. Fiji consisted of over 300 islands, about half of them regularly inhabited. That posed unique infrastructural challenges which bore heavily on women owing to their traditional roles and domestic responsibilities. Improving education and access to reproductive health services was essential to redressing the situation of rural women. The Ministry of Women was working to ensure equitable development for both rural and urban women and men. The functions referred to as unpaid domestic labour had to be fairly and equally compensated. National statistics rarely captured the work done by women, who were involved in all sectors of the country's economy, and accounting for that work would recognize women's tremendous contribution, which had previously been taken for granted.

35. **Mr. Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) said that violence against women in all its forms, including domestic violence and harmful traditional practices, was a grave violation of women's dignity and human rights. In some countries, female foeticide and infanticide continued. Violence against women often resulted from the belief that women were not human beings with rights but objects to be exploited. In that context, there was an increase in prostitution and the trafficking of women and girls. The Holy See was collaborating with all those of goodwill to give priority to social policies aimed at eliminating the causes of such violence. For example, in June 2005 the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People had organized an international meeting of pastoral care for the liberation of street women.

36. According to recent International Labour Organization statistics, women represented 60 per cent of the world's 550 million working poor. In order to reverse the feminization of poverty, more must be done to increase women's access to and control over productive resources and capital. Several Catholic organizations were helping women in Cambodia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latin America and the Caribbean to form self-managed microcredit programmes for women. Illiteracy, particularly among women in rural areas, was an obstacle to development and the attainment of women's basic human rights. The specific health-care needs of women required urgent attention, notably in the areas of HIV/AIDS, malaria, potable water and sanitation.

37. **Mr. Taranda** (Belarus) said that gender equality and the advancement of women were increasingly

mainstreamed and showcased in various strategies at the national and international level, and that progress was steady. His Government was pleased to see the United Nations agencies had taken a lead role in that area and welcomed the declaration issued by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-ninth session. However, despite successes in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, there were still many problems that impeded the full attainment of women's rights, including violence and discrimination, the trafficking of women and girls, gender inequality, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the violation of women's rights, particularly their reproductive rights. Such problems could not be solved by determination alone; results-oriented decisions must be taken in order to deal with gender problems and to expand rights and opportunities for women. His Government agreed with the approaches outlined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/170) concerning the need for specific recommendations on further action.

38. His delegation commended the initiatives taken by United Nations agencies to draw greater attention to the worldwide problem of the trafficking of people, in particular women and girls. A form of modern-day slavery, trafficking afflicted not only developing countries, but industrialized countries as well, and required a proper response and appropriate action by the United Nations and its Members. Aware of the seriousness of the problem, Belarus was working to improve and expand education and outreach work, and to develop a network of agencies providing social services. Moreover, a national strategy was being implemented to combat trafficking and prostitution. Lastly, he proposed that all countries concerned pool their efforts and unite under the aegis of the United Nations in a global partnership against slavery and the trafficking of human beings.

39. *Ms. Tomić (Slovenia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

40. **Ms. Mladineo** (Croatia) said that her country was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol. Full implementation of the Convention, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Millennium Development Goals would be pursued through Croatia's 2006-2010 national policy for the promotion of gender equality. In the past few years, Croatia had adopted several laws in that field, including constitutional amendments that recognized the principle of gender equality. The 2003 Law on Gender Equality was based on the provisions of the Convention. The law protected women against discrimination and established a policy of equal opportunity for men and women; it had led to the appointment of the country's first Gender Equality Ombudsperson, the creation of a national Office for Gender Equality and the establishment of gender equality commissions at the local level.

41. Her Government had adopted a National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence for the period 2005-2007. Also, it had recently adopted a protocol on procedure in cases of domestic violence aimed at ensuring conditions for effective and comprehensive responses by authorities to help both the victims and the perpetrators of domestic violence and to promote non-violent conflict resolution and respect for gender equality.

42. **Ms. Thandar** (Myanmar) said that her Government was heartened to see that since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, women around the world were not only more aware of their rights, but were better positioned to exercise those rights. There had been tangible progress on many fronts, but new challenges had also emerged, most of which stemmed from the age-old problem of poverty. In Myanmar, where 70 per cent of the population lived in rural areas, women played a crucial role working on farms and engaging in off-farm activities. Access to credit enabled women to initiate, sustain and increase productivity. Credit and loans schemes were offered to women running small enterprises and to casual sellers.

43. Her Government believed that the main way to alleviate poverty was to provide educational opportunities. Furthermore, women's access to reproductive health care was crucial to ensure gender equality and better lives for women, and a basic reproductive health programme had been implemented nationwide. Trafficking of people, particularly women and children, was a form of modern-day slavery, and the international community needed to fight that scourge. National non-governmental organizations had conducted extensive, nationwide prevention and support activities, such as awareness-raising among communities and their leaders, capacity-building for volunteers through educational talks on trafficking and violence against women, and support services.

44. Her delegation took exception to the fact that the Secretary-General's report on steps taken by the General Assembly and its Main Committees to promote the goal of gender equality through the gender mainstreaming strategy chose to reproduce, without any direct relevance, information concerning the human rights situation in Myanmar. Her delegation failed to see any connection between that reference to Myanmar and the main purpose of the report.

45. **Mr. Diallo** (Mali) said that the gap between men and women in his country was widening and that many women in Mali suffered from lack of food security, high maternal mortality rates, malaria, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, genital mutilation and other forms of violence. Poverty was widespread, with more than half of the population living on less than one dollar a day. Seventy-eight per cent of women in Mali lived in rural areas and played an important role in the informal sector. To encourage true women's advancement, Mali had adopted the 2002-2006 national strategy to improve health and education and eradicate poverty among women and girls, based on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

46. Efforts to reduce poverty and improve the lot of women were paying off. For example, school enrolment for girls had increased from 33.4 per cent in 1995-1996 to 53.6 per cent in 2005-2006. Women's participation had increased in all spheres of public decision-making. Women had greater access to microcredit, as well as free caesarean section delivery services in public hospitals. However, if Mali were to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 deadline, much more would need to be done to reduce maternal and child mortality rates and poverty.

47. **Mr. Gill** (India) said that there was currently a wider recognition than in the past of the need for fundamental equality between women and men. Translating that realization into reality, however, remained a major challenge, particularly for developing countries, and would require a greater empowerment of women at the social, economic and political levels.

48. The Prime Minister of India had stated that no society could claim to be a part of the modern civilized world unless it treated its women on a par with its men. The Government had, accordingly, made the political, legal, educational and economic empowerment of women one of its top priorities and a key to good governance. It had taken institutional and legal measures, including affirmative actions to strengthen women's ability to participate at all political levels. Thirty-three per cent of local government seats had been reserved for women and a national effort was now under way towards a similar reservation of seats for women in the Indian Parliament. Changes had also been made to the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Hindu Succession Act to empower women further.

49. The Government had set a target to reduce the female poverty ratio by five per cent by 2007 and by 15 per cent by 2012. The concept of self-help women's groups in India had made a significant impact in empowering women in rural areas. In India, the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women sought to promote gender equality in all governmental laws, policies and programmes. The Joint Standing Committee of the Parliament on the Empowerment of Women supported specific gender-equality legislation and monitored the application of gender-equality principles in all laws.

50. The Indian delegation welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on violence against women, an issue that needed to be addressed with urgency. In 2005, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act had been adopted by the Indian Parliament. National efforts to eliminate the global phenomenon of trafficking in women were not enough. There needed to be greater cohesion in the international community's efforts to address the problem. The National Human Rights Commission of India, together with the relevant national agencies of multilateral bodies, was tackling the matter, and 21 of India's states had designated focal points.

51. Her delegation had unreservedly endorsed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session. It had welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the future operation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), but felt that the responsibility for its smooth functioning, by way of improved financial support, rested with the Member States.

52. **Mr. Hamidon Ali** (Malaysia) said that since his country's attainment of independence in 1957 Malaysian women had actively participated in and contributed towards its social and economic development. His Government's position was that

women were an important resource that could be mobilized to achieve the national development agenda. It considered that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Millennium Development Goals were inextricably linked. Their principles and goals were compatible with Malaysia's national agenda to promote women's rights and its national action plan for the advancement of women, introduced in 1997.

53. In Malaysia, changes had been made in the legal and institutional framework to protect and safeguard the rights of women and to improve their status. As the country progressed towards achieving greater gender equality, the role of the Government had been consistently supportive. Women in Malaysia had greatly benefited from the Government's poverty reduction policies and strategies and the improvements made to health and education services, basic infrastructure and access to economic resources and markets.

54. In the workplace, women had managed to break through the proverbial glass ceiling, and many held high-ranking positions in both the Government and the private sector. Recognizing that information and communications technology could contribute to the empowerment of women, the Malaysian Government had taken steps to improve women's access to such technology. More educational and training opportunities were being provided to enable women to meet the demands of the knowledge-based economy.

55. Special emphasis was being given to programmes to improve the economic well-being of women, particularly in rural areas. Measures to facilitate women's involvement in business through the provision of easy access to capital and special schemes for women entrepreneurs were among the measures taken. Health and medical care was a priority area on the national development agenda, and the average female life expectancy had continued to improve. Awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS were also being conducted. The Government had also taken measures aimed at eliminating domestic violence and other crimes against women. It urged continued international efforts to get rid of the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation, which was a new form of human slavery.

56. In May 2005, Malaysia had hosted the Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on the Advancement of Women, which had adopted the Putrajaya Declaration and Programme of Action on the advancement of women in Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement.

57. **Ms. Hill** (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Australia and Canada, said that the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was fundamental to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to the promotion and protection of the rights of women around the world. She welcomed the steady momentum towards universal ratification of that Convention and called on the States that had not yet done so to ratify it as a matter of the highest priority. In addition, she urged all Member States to honour the commitment made by their leaders and to ensure that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was given adequate resources to do the job required of it.

58. The implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security was of fundamental importance to achieving sustainable peace and development. It wished, once again, to register its unwavering commitment and support for the full and urgent implementation of that resolution.

59. Canada, Australia and New Zealand were committed to enhancing consideration of the rights of women and gender equality in United Nations forums. Far too many negotiations went over old ground even though, on many issues, the time for negotiation was over. Debate in some cases had become stale and repetitive, with no tangible benefits for women. Accordingly, States should be careful to put forward only initiatives that added value to international debate or that promoted implementation.

60. **Ms. Enkhtsetseg** (Mongolia) said that throughout the world women still suffered from violence, infectious diseases, malnutrition, lack of access to education and health services and discriminatory attitudes. If the situation did not change, it would be impossible to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015. Recognizing that the majority of the extreme poor lived in rural areas, especially in Africa and Asia, the Millennium Project had proposed rural development as one of the

seven key development clusters. A number of recommendations had been identified in the Secretary-General's report (A/60/165) on empowering rural women and her delegation intended to incorporate the relevant recommendations in the draft resolution on improving the situation of women in rural areas that would be submitted under agenda item 64.

61. Despite the progress achieved in the 1996-2002 national programme for the advancement of women, Mongolia still had a long way to go to ensure full gender equality. The Government had adopted a new 2002-2015 national programme on gender equality following national consultations involving all the major stakeholders, with a view to removing barriers to equal participation of men and women in economic and social development and promoting the family as the basic unit of society. The programme had time-bound goals and an explicit set of monitoring and evaluation indicators. Its critical areas of concern were: gender equality in family welfare and development; rural development; gender equality in decision-making; the establishment of national mechanisms; and increased participation of women in civil society. Parliament had adopted measures to strengthen gender equality in the family and to combat domestic violence. To facilitate the implementation of those measures, it had proclaimed 2004 "The year in support of the family".

62. The first national report on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Mongolia had identified a number of priorities under Goal 3, including: gender-sensitive budgeting; the economic empowerment of women and prevention of gender-based discrimination in the workplace; the formulation of policies to increase women's representation in management and decision-making; and the amendment of legislation or charters of political parties to increase the proportion of women candidates running for elected office.

63. **Ms. Holguín Cuéllar** (Colombia) said that, despite significant achievements, her country still faced many challenges in promoting the advancement of women. Women had equal access to all levels of education. They had a lower rate of school dropouts and a better academic performance than men. Having entered the labour market on a large scale, they had increased their participation in decision-making bodies and occupied some of the most important posts in the public administration.

64. The Government had seven tools to bring about gender equality: reform of the education system; extension and improvement of social protection and social security; promotion of an economy based on solidarity; social management of the rural economy; social management of the public services; promotion of entrepreneurship; and improvements in the quality of urban life. The four main areas of intervention were: employment and entrepreneurial skills; political participation; violence against women; and institutional strengthening. Each of those areas included, inter alia, income-generating and training programmes, designed to enable women to have access to small loans, to market their products and to increase their political participation. National legislation guaranteed equal opportunities for women in society and the Government had created a gender issues observatory to monitor gender issues.

65. The Government considered that boosting the rural sector was a priority and was conducting a programme to guarantee equal opportunities for rural women. Its main aim was to remove the political, socio-economic and cultural obstacles that prevented rural women from participating fully in economic growth and social development and from fully exercising their rights. In support of this programme, the Ministry of Agriculture had created a fund that focused on training rural women on ways to access the available policy tools.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/60/SR.15

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Summary record of the 15th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 14 October 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:	Mr. Batagira	(Uganda)
later:	Mr. Carvalho (Vice-Chairman)	(Portugal)

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05-55322 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 67: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (A/60/170 and Corr.1, A/60/183 and A/60/...)

Ms. Akam Pan (United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict) said the children were the most vulnerable victims of armed conflict as more than 20 countries in the world were currently in the throes of violent conflict. They were killed or maimed, were orphaned, displaced or separated from their families, and their access to education and health care was compromised. They were used as child soldiers and exploited and abused. Girls faced additional risks of sexual violence and exploitation.

2. The General Assembly had repeatedly expressed its strong commitment to protecting war-affected children, in particular by establishing and renewing the mandate of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and had identified the issue as a pressing and crucial priority, especially according it in its 2005 Summit Outcome. Moreover, through collaborative efforts in the previous eight years among United Nations system bodies, Member States and civil society, significant advances had been achieved, including greater global awareness of the issue, more extensive field programmes and training of field personnel, and greater involvement by non-governmental and regional organizations as well as by children themselves.

3. Great scope for strengthening the implementation and consolidation of an extensive array of protection standards for children had increased, in particular the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which had entered into force in 2002 and addressed recruitment and use of boys and girls by armed forces and armed groups, and the Security Council Resolutions on children and armed conflict adopted by the Security Council. That progress had been achieved because all the parties concerned had given due attention to the key principle of the best interest of the child, which it was important to continue to bear in mind in every aspect of the efforts to advance the agenda for children affected by armed conflict. Despite that progress, however, the situation for such children was unacceptably grave and unacceptable. A considerable gap existed between international standards and the situation on the ground. For that reason, the Special Representative had called on Member States to undertake the "era of application" campaign for the enforcement of those standards and had made it a priority of the Office's advocacy agenda. The campaign promoted four complementary components: (a) a monitoring and reporting mechanism; (b) monitoring of armed actors in compliance action plans; (c) the development of standards and methodology of local capacities and activities.

4. [illegible] The Special Representative had also briefed the Security Council on the monitoring mechanism, presented to the annual report on children and armed conflict (S/2005/72) for a resolution that provided comprehensive options to protect war-affected children, including a separate monitoring and reporting mechanism, initial immediate implementation for Security Council and country-requested listing as an addition to any Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict.

5. Public advocacy and dissemination had an essential part to play in making international and local standards better known on the ground and in creating a critical mass of public denunciation, so that the abuse and victimization of children became socially unacceptable. Civil society groups and networks were of crucial importance in that effort, since without the involvement of community leaders and institutions on the front line, it could have no deep or sustainable impact. Much of the work had therefore to be done through them, while at the same time there was a need to promote indigenous cultural norms that had traditionally provided protection to children in times of war. Such norms should be seen as an important complement to international standards.

6. [illegible] Member States had a key role to play in ensuring the end of impunity, having primary responsibility for the protection and relief of children within their territories. It was for United Nations and other international partners to support and complement national [illegible] and efforts at reconciliation and implementation, with a view to preventing and improving the lives of children in situations of armed conflict. He emphasized in that connection that the role of the Special Representative consisted in articulating those and progressing initiatives, which were then implemented by the appropriate operational actors within and outside the United Nations system. Pursuant to a recommendation by the Security Council in his comprehensive assessment of

approach to poverty assessments was therefore of critical importance.

9. Material poverty meant malnutrition, which was implicated in about 40 per cent of the 11 million deaths of children under five in developing countries each year and, when resources were scarce, girls tended to suffer more from it than boys. Material poverty also meant being deprived of education, which again tended to affect girls more than boys. Such gender-specific deprivations had to be viewed holistically, since limited education meant restricted access to information and hence increasing susceptibility to disease and rights violations. That confining environment thus further exacerbated the cycle of poverty.

10. Armed conflict also exacerbated both the causes and consequences of poverty, and she therefore welcomed the Security Council's decision, referred to by the previous speaker, to establish a mechanism to report on and monitor abuses of children's rights. Additionally, poverty played a crucial role in the disproportionate spread of HIV/AIDS among the female population, as it forced young girls into prostitution and sexual trafficking.

11. Another form of poverty was deprivation of family care, both in its emotional effect and because families were the first line of defence in protecting children from abuse, violence and exploitation. Yet on account of material poverty, millions of children around the world lived without parental care. While, however, the family had primary responsibility for protecting children, Governments were ultimately responsible for supporting families and ensuring the well-being of children and should reduce poverty by improving opportunities for disadvantaged children and enabling adolescents to be active participants in society. She also called on them to support the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding the development and adoption of international guidelines on children without parental care. In conclusion, she expressed the hope that in its resolution under the current item the Third Committee would reflect a definition of child poverty that highlighted its interrelated aspects.

12. **Mr. Mokhiber** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), noting that 2005 marked the fifteenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, said that it was the most

widely ratified of human rights conventions and that the number of States parties to its two Optional Protocols had increased to three-digit figures. He noted that the Committee on the Rights of the Child would as from its next session be meeting in two parallel chambers, one to consider the many initial reports submitted under the two Optional Protocols, and the other to review periodic reports under the Convention.

13. In addition to considering the reports of States parties, the Committee had continued to work on specific thematic issues, in particular that of children without parental care, to which it had devoted its day of general discussion in September. Following that event, it had adopted a set of recommendations and recognized the need to give consideration to the preparation of further international standards or guidelines on the protection of children without parental care and in need of alternative care.

14. Committee members had also contributed to activities related to the Secretary-General's study on violence against children, an issue which had been highlighted in the Committee's review of the reports of States parties. The Committee was confident that the outcome of the study would provide States parties with tools to take action, in partnership with civil society, to protect every child against all forms of violence. The Committee was attentive to the follow-up given to its recommendations, initiating a series of workshops thereon, the third of which would be held in Buenos Aires in November 2005, while Costa Rica had shown interest in hosting a similar workshop in 2006. In view of the Secretary-General's proposals for the reform of the United Nations human rights system, and following a meeting with the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Committee members had expressed their eagerness to collaborate with all stakeholders in enhancing the operation of the treaty body system for the benefit of rights holders.

15. **Mr. Nkingiye** (Burundi) said that the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/59/695-S/2002/72) covered events in Burundi only until December 2004 and he pointed out that there had been many positive developments in the country since then. Noting that armed rebel groups often failed to comply with the resolutions adopted to protect children, he asked what action could be taken to ensure that they did.

16. **Ms. Holguín** (Colombia) recalled that her Government persistently sought to prevent illegal armed groups from recruiting children and asked what joint action could be taken by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF to prevent such groups from doing so.

17. **Ms. Thandar** (Myanmar) said it was her understanding that the former Special Representative himself had acknowledged recent positive developments in Myanmar, including the recommendation by the country team in Myanmar that the Government's armed forces should not be listed in annex II of the Secretary-General's report. Those forces had nevertheless been listed, apparently as a result of tremendous pressure. Her Government was willing to cooperate with the Office of the Special Representative if the information provided by the Office was reliable, verified and credible. She therefore asked what action the Special Representative would undertake to ensure the reliability of the information and what should be done in similar cases where country teams recommended against an action or had not verified certain figures.

18. **Ms. Sham Poo** (Under-Secretary-General, Interim Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict) reiterated that whatever action was taken must be in the best interests of the child. Responding to the comments from the representative of Burundi, she welcomed the positive developments in that country but noted that there were still a number of issues to be resolved. Since Burundi was one of the countries on the agenda of the Security Council, her Office would closely follow the Council's suggestions. The United Nations task force, under the leadership of the Special Representative, would work with the Government of Burundi and all relevant parties to obtain reliable data so that actions could be taken. Action plans with the parties recruiting child soldiers and committing other grave child rights violations would also ensure that such activities ceased.

19. In response to the representative of Colombia, she said that there were clearly a number of measures that could be taken to prevent children from being recruited by armed groups as well as other measures to help reintegrate them into society after demobilization. The operational work of UNICEF in that area was carried out in close cooperation with her Office.

20. Responding to the comments made by the representative of Myanmar, she said that since Myanmar was not on the agenda of the Security Council, the first phase of the monitoring and reporting mechanism would not apply to it. However, that did not mean that the international community should not continue its work to stop the recruitment of child soldiers and protect the rights of children in Myanmar. She acknowledged the commitment of the Government of Myanmar to do everything possible in that regard.

21. **Ms. Salah** (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund) said that the objective of all UNICEF programmes in Colombia and elsewhere was to realize the rights of the child. To that end, UNICEF sought to build a protective environment for children by reinforcing the family, since isolated and poor families often saw the army as the only solution to feed and clothe their children. States also had an important role to play in reinforcing the family and the community. UNICEF was a credible force working with Governments and non-State parties, including rebel groups, to demobilize children and reintegrate them into society. Effective preventive measures taken by UNICEF included opening schools to children beyond school age.

22. **Mr. Thomson** (United Kingdom) requested further information about effective United Nations strategies for mainstreaming the issue of children in armed conflict. He also asked what specific action UNICEF was taking to protect children, including orphans, from HIV/AIDS discrimination, and what legal or other measures it recommended that Governments should take to tackle the stigmatization and ignorance of the disease.

23. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) said that his delegation appreciated the visit of the Executive Director of UNICEF to the Sudan and hoped for continued cooperation with UNICEF for the demobilization and disarmament of children involved in armed groups. He welcomed the efforts of UNICEF to fully integrate children into society through the provision of education and health care and encouraged the international community to support those efforts.

24. **Mr. Sebulime** (Uganda) said that the report of the Special Representative (A/60/335) read like a statement of political activism rather than advocacy. He asked whether future reports would continue in that vein and whether they would also continue to focus excessively on the views of non-governmental organizations with their own agendas, such as Human Rights Watch. The statement in the report that the Office of the Special Representative had "remained actively engaged" in situations where visits had not taken place required clarification and in such cases the Special Representative should take up longstanding invitations to visit in order to facilitate more accurate reporting. The report also placed greater emphasis on some regional organizations than others and a more even-handed approach should be adopted in future.

25. **Ms. Olivera** (Mexico) expressed her delegation's gratitude to UNICEF for its assistance to the areas of Mexico and Central America recently affected by Hurricane Stan. Her delegation appreciated the continued assistance provided by UNICEF, in coordination with other United Nations agencies, to deal with emergency situations that undoubtedly increased the risks to the well-being, the rights and the lives of children.

26. **Mr. Ouattara** (Burkina Faso) asked to what extent UNICEF could ensure that its assistance reached the poorest sections of society, particularly children in rural areas, and to what extent schooling could be provided from the earliest possible age.

27. **Ms. Sulimani** (Sierra Leone) pointed out that her Government used affirmative action to provide education for girls and that free primary education was currently available for girls in the northern and eastern regions of the country, where girls had traditionally been deprived of schooling for cultural reasons. She was grateful to UNICEF for its assistance in that area.

28. **Ms. García-Matos** (Venezuela) asked what programmes and activities UNICEF had envisaged for cooperation with States on the problem of street children.

29. **Ms. Sham Poo** (Under-Secretary-General, Interim Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict) said that the credit for the important work reflected in the report of the Special Representative belonged to Mr. Otunnu, and to his team and the other relevant actors from the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

30. In response to the representative of the United Kingdom, she said that mainstreaming was an important issue and, in that connection, drew attention to the comprehensive assessment report (A/59/331) in

which the Secretary-General had issued a number of recommendations on mainstreaming. The issue of children in armed conflict had already been mainstreamed within UNICEF and it was important to do the same throughout the rest of the United Nations. Indeed, all the heads of the United Nations departments and agencies had recently made a commitment to that end. The Special Representative would make special efforts to ensure an effective, consultative and collaborative approach with all other parts of the system. Furthermore, the Special Representative was the convener of an internal task force on children affected by armed conflict, within the framework of which meetings had been held with all the relevant parts of the United Nations. The Secretary-General had also focused in recent reports on the need for strong collaboration with non-governmental organizations and the Office of the Special Representative would continue such efforts both in the field and at Headquarters.

31. Responding to the representative of Uganda, she said that her end-of-assignment report strongly recommended that the next Special Representative should undertake some key visits, including to Uganda. She would have visited Uganda herself but for the fact that her appointment as Interim Special Representative had been for only two months. However, she had recently had fruitful discussions with the President of Uganda on the issue of children affected by armed conflict and she felt confident that the new Special Representative would visit Uganda as soon as possible.

32. The Office of the Special Representative, in accordance with its terms of reference, focused specifically on advocacy to promote and apply international standards and norms for the protection of children affected by armed conflict. The Special Representative's advocacy and outreach would underscore that the best interests of the child should be given primary consideration in all actions concerning war-affected children, ensuring that child protection, rehabilitation and development received the highest priority in policies, processes and programmes in conflict and post-conflict settings. One of the most important tasks of the Special Representative was to unblock political impasses so that child protection commitments could be secured from State and non-State actors at the national and regional levels. The Office of the Special Representative would continue to work with all the relevant regional organizations and not just a few of them.

33. **Ms. Salah** (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund), referring to the questions from the representative of the United Kingdom, said that UNICEF was about to launch an important HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment campaign focusing on children and orphans. In order to eradicate HIV/AIDS discrimination, UNICEF was also working with many countries on legislative reform based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was not enough simply to adopt and ratify the Convention but also to implement it, thereby reinforcing its main principle of non-discrimination. UNICEF was working with schools to ensure that children infected with HIV/AIDS were accepted by them, and it also advocated free compulsory education so that children orphaned by HIV/AIDS were accepted by schools. With regard to the feminization of HIV/AIDS, UNICEF had specifically designed programmes to inform girls about the disease and how to avoid contracting it.

34. UNICEF would continue to assist Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso with education programmes for girls, especially in rural areas, and would assist Burkina Faso with the preschool programmes already begun there. UNICEF would also continue to work with the Sudan for the demobilization and disarmament of children involved in armed groups.

35. **Mr. Pinheiro** (Independent Expert for the United Nations study on violence against children), introducing his report in document A/60/282, said that children still lagged far behind adults with respect to legal protection against assault and humiliation. However, he was encouraged that a large number of Governments, non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society had responded to his questionnaire and that the study process had placed violence against children firmly on the international agenda.

36. The nine regional consultations facilitated by UNICEF with the support of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the World Health Organization, had provided an opportunity to focus attention on violence against children and to strengthen partnerships and networks. Even more important, the consultations had generated the political will needed to ensure that the issue would be addressed, indeed,

follow-up activities in various parts of the world were already being implemented.

37. His country visits had enabled him to identify particular forms of violence against children and observe practical measures to prevent and respond to such violence. The concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the work of the special rapporteurs and of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights had also been taken into account.

38. While he was encouraged by the growing awareness of the need to address violence against children, he remained struck by the prevalence of the problem, which knew no boundaries of geography, class, politics, race or culture. With the rapid development of modern communications technology, virtual space had become another area where children could be exploited or victimized.

39. Violence should never be used as a means of discipline or excused as a social norm. The objective of the study should be to ensure that children enjoyed the same protection as adults and to challenge social norms which ratified violent practices under the guise of tradition. Honour killings, female genital mutilation and homophobia could not be condoned under any circumstance.

40. One of the most serious issues confronting modern society was the vulnerability of children in conflict with the law. Children faced a high risk of violence at almost every stage of their contact with the juvenile justice system, yet, the overwhelming majority of them did not belong there. Security and judicial systems needed to become more accountable, particularly to marginalized populations. It was critical to ensure that children did not come into conflict with the law by developing imaginative ways to divert them.

41. Although States were primarily responsible for preventing and responding to all forms of violence against children, the family played a unique role and must be respected, supported and strengthened. Non-violent, positive forms of discipline needed to be promoted so that the family's role in protecting children from all forms of violence could be reinforced.

42. Real change could not be achieved unless Member States developed comprehensive, coordinated public policies respecting the obligations enshrined in the human rights treaties on violence against children. Routine violence against children must be recognized for what it was: a serious threat to national development and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The involvement of all sectors — Governments, the international community, civil society, children and adolescents — was required if the study which he was finalizing was to have a broad impact.

43. **Mr. Abbas** (Iraq) wished to know whether the report on violence against children contained any specific plan regarding children in Iraq. He also would like to have further information on UNICEF plans to assist Iraqi children.

44. **Mr. González** (El Salvador) drew attention to the fact that juvenile street gangs were gaining ground in Central America, Mexico and the United States and wished to know if the problem would be addressed in the report.

45. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt) said that her delegation was pleased that the study focused on cooperation, while bearing in mind the particularities of each culture. It wished to know whether there was any link between the study on violence against children and the study on violence against women.

46. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil) recalled that an earlier report by the World Health Organization had highlighted the problem of violence against children and older people in the home and wondered whether the study addressed that particular issue.

47. **Mr. Diallo** (Mali) said that his Government had taken note of the concerns expressed in paragraph 32 of the report and that they would be dealt with appropriately. With regard to female genital mutilation, he wished to point out that, although the practice was punishable by law, the majority of Mali women were unaware of their rights. He therefore called upon the international community to help raise awareness of the problem.

48. **Mr. Pinheiro** (Independent Expert for the United Nations study on violence against children), in reply to the representative of Iraq, said that the study devoted considerable attention to the consequences of armed conflict, especially with regard to refugees, displaced persons and children. Regarding children's gangs in Central America, he said it was important that Governments should focus on prevention as well as

punishment. The report would include a discussion of the problem and would highlight the fact that Governments in the region were serious about tackling children's gangs. Concerning the question from the representative of Egypt, he said that the experts worked together as they prepared their reports on violence and that a connection did exist between the study on violence against women and the study on violence against children.

49. As to corporal punishment, the emphasis should be placed on teaching parents alternative forms of discipline rather than prosecuting them. In keeping with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it was important to establish a dialogue between parents, teachers and children and to work closely with the different visions that some countries had concerning corporal punishment. Regarding the comment by the representative of Mali, it was generally agreed that criminalizing female genital mutilation was not the solution. Several African countries had succeeded in eliminating the problem by concentrating on raising awareness at the community level.

50. **Ms. Salah** (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund), referring to the question by the representative of Iraq on UNICEF plans to assist children in that country, pointed out that she had met with Iraqi government representatives and non-governmental organizations in Cairo. The participants had discussed ways to end violence against children in Iraq, which included working with families and society as a whole to protect children. Further meetings would be held to discuss ways to reconstruct the country's educational sector.

51. She agreed with the Independent Expert that awareness-raising was the key to ending female genital mutilation and pointed out that 1,300 villages in Senegal had managed to put a stop to the practice by working at the community level. UNICEF had organized a meeting on female genital mutilation in Dakar in December 2005 that would bring together many African government representatives as well as parliamentarians.

52. *Mr. Carvalho (Portugal), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

53. **Mr. Wood** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and, in addition, Liechtenstein and the Republic of Moldova, said that the 2005 World Summit had brought home the unpalatable truth of just how far the international community still had to go to meet the commitments set out in the final document of the twenty-seventh special session of the Assembly, entitled "A world fit for children" (resolution S-27/2, annex). The Convention on the Rights of the Child must constitute the primary standard in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. The European Union called on UNICEF to continue to promote the rights of children in its programmes.

54. The European Union remained critically concerned about the situation of children affected by armed conflict, both as combatants and victims. It strongly condemned the recruitment of child soldiers by armed groups and Governments and, where such recruitment had taken place, called upon Governments and armed groups to demobilize, disarm and reintegrate children into their communities. The European Union encouraged the parties concerned to develop and implement the action plans called for in Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005) without further delay and to take all practicable measures to protect children outside direct conflict zones, including refugees, who were orphaned, displaced, unaccompanied or otherwise made vulnerable to abuse as a result of conflict.

55. The situation of girls deserved particular attention. The European Union Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict provided a useful framework for activity in that area. The European Union continued to support a range of programmes in countries affected by armed conflict, including demobilization, rehabilitation and anti-trafficking initiatives, and to raise its concerns, both in its regular political dialogue and in specific contacts undertaken to implement the Guidelines, with the Governments of countries affected by conflict.

56. The European Union supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to implement the monitoring and reporting mechanism called for in Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). It urged all Member States that had not already done so to sign, ratify and fully implement the relevant international instruments aimed at the protection of children affected by armed conflict, particularly the second Optional Protocol to the

Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The European Union reaffirmed its support for the Court in the fight against impunity, including in the case of crimes committed against children in situations of armed conflict.

57. The European Union remained concerned about the impact of the AIDS epidemic on children. It stressed the importance of effective national frameworks in response to HIV and AIDS to ensure coordinated, transparent, participatory and accountable approaches. It was also concerned about the welfare and rights of children whose parents had HIV, AIDS orphans and children at risk, particularly sexually exploited children and those made more vulnerable by armed conflict, and had welcomed the special focus on children orphaned or separated from their parents by HIV or AIDS during the day of general discussion of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in September 2005.

58. Prevention must be at the heart of any comprehensive policy to address HIV and AIDS, and the key to prevention was education. The European Union supported the call for universal access to comprehensive information related to AIDS prevention, as contained in the policy position paper on intensifying HIV prevention of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) adopted in June 2005.

59. Throughout the world, children continued needlessly to contract HIV at birth because insufficient support was given to expectant mothers to prevent mother-to-child transmission. Such support should include not only the provision of essential drugs and care for mothers-to-be, but also voluntary counselling and testing for pregnant women and their partners. Women needed access to reproductive health services, as agreed in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, in order to be able to make informed choices about pregnancy and childbearing. Bearing in mind that some girls were married as young as 11 or 12 years old, the international community must recognize the rights of young people concerning their own sexual and reproductive health in order to prevent HIV infection and early pregnancy.

60. The European Union was committed to the universal provision of quality treatment and care and endorsed the call for full and equal access to treatment contained in the outcome of the Group of Eight summit. It called on the pharmaceutical industry and all other stakeholders to ensure the development of medication that was suitable for children of all ages by 2010.

61. Children suffered more than most from stigma based on HIV status — actual or presumed — of the child or parent. Similarly, gender-based discrimination in inheritance law often put children orphaned by AIDS at an even greater disadvantage. The European Union urged all countries to address inequalities in the law and to sign and implement the UNICEF-sponsored *Framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children Living in a World with HIV and AIDS*.

62. The European Union was committed to playing its part to ensure the successful replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and was determined to work with the United Nations system and other partners to implement the recommendations of the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors. It reaffirmed its commitment to the outcomes of the International Conference on Population and Development, the special sessions of the General Assembly on Children and on HIV/AIDS, and the 2005 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS. It welcomed the decision of UNICEF to include assistance to children affected by HIV and AIDS as one of its strategic priorities in its latest five-year plan and looked forward to working with them to implement it.

63. **Mr. Koonjul** (Mauritius), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that the outcome document of the United Nations special session on children in 2002 (resolution S-27/2) strongly reinforced the Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Declaration. SADC had noted the progress made in the follow-up to the special session on children, as contained in the Secretary-General's report A/60/207, and stressed that much remained to be done.

64. SADC attached great importance to the promotion and protection of the rights of children, including its continued support to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the African Child. SADC Heads

of State and Government had therefore launched the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan in 2004, which emphasized that children's rights should be mainstreamed in all development endeavours.

65. Millions of children, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, remained vulnerable to chronic ill health and disease and continued to be affected by conflicts. The participants in the 2005 World Summit had recognized that malaria could be eradicated easily if the international community garnered the necessary political will. Although the use of insecticide-treated bed-nets and indoor residual house sprays had proved to be largely effective in the control of malaria, the practice was still not sufficiently widespread. The international community should therefore assist in addressing that issue in a concerted manner. In addition, as routine immunization significantly contributed to the reduction of infant and under-five mortality, his delegation looked forward to the launch of the Global Immunization Vision and Strategy for 2006-2015. HIV/AIDS had a particularly devastating impact on the education sector. Recent studies had found that access to education for children, particularly girls, dramatically lowered their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS infection.

66. SADC member States regarded gender equality and the empowerment of women as being at the core of all the Millennium Development Goals. The girl child deserved special attention. Furthermore, unless men and boys and girls themselves were made more aware of their responsibilities concerning gender equality, the international community would never be able to fully address some of the persistent problems affecting girl children. SADC had endeavoured to keep the focus on the situation of the girl child by, among other things, submitting a biennial resolution in the Committee. It urged all Member States to continue their support by sponsoring the resolution at the current session.

67. SADC strongly condemned violence against women and children in all its forms and was committed to the prevention and eradication of violence against children in accordance with the SADC 1998 addendum to its 1997 Declaration on Gender and Development. Although protecting children from violence was a matter of grave concern to SADC, providing that protection was very complex owing to insufficient capacity. SADC shared the concerns that were raised in the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/60/335), including the concern that data availability in the area of child protection remained weak. Nevertheless, it was encouraging that the protection of war-affected children had been firmly placed on the international peace and security agenda and that the Security Council had adopted resolution 1612 (2005), calling for reliable information on grave violations against children in armed conflict and for the systematic prohibition of recruitment of child soldiers and abuse of girl children as wives and sex slaves.

68. **Mr. Chia** (Singapore) said that his Government was guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the 21 specific goals and targets for child health, education and protection adopted by the United Nations special session on children held in 2002. At the national level, the rights of the child were monitored by an interministerial committee and enshrined in a national statement on the best interests of the child. Four pillars underpinned the policies of child development in Singapore: good laws; a strong family network; a comprehensive family network; and a strong education system.

69. His Government continued to strive towards maximizing educational opportunity for children. All children must attend at least six years of primary school. Measures to encourage greater recognition of student achievements and talents in non-academic areas had been put in place. Also, given that some children and young persons required special care and attention, efforts had been made to coordinate the work of various agencies to support children and youth who left school prematurely and to provide life skills and work skills training.

70. Singapore had ratified International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour. Employment legislation had been amended to raise the general minimum working age for young persons from 14 to 15 and the minimum age for light work from 12 to 13. Singapore therefore intended to ratify ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment before the end of 2005.

71. **Ms. Tian** Ni (China) said that in many regions of the world tens of thousands of children continued to die each year from armed conflict and disease, to be subject to child labour and unable to attend school, or to suffer from malnutrition, abject poverty, sexual

abuse and exploitation. The international community must strengthen cooperation and take effective measures to eliminate the root causes of the above-mentioned problems. The developed countries in particular must provide financial resources and technologies to the developing countries so as to create a sound environment for the healthy development of all children.

72. Children in China accounted for one fifth of the world's total. Respect for the elderly and caring for the young had been a long-standing tradition in China. Her Government, which had always attached importance to the promotion and protection of the rights of children, had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, the ILO Convention on the worst forms of child labour, and the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption. It was currently giving positive consideration to the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on children in armed conflict.

73. The Government had put in place a series of legislative and administrative measures aimed at protecting the rights of children in keeping with the foregoing conventions and protocols. It had also established a comprehensive nationwide organizational structure to address women's and children's issues involving the relevant State agencies and had outlined a plan for the development of children in China for 2001-2010 which focused on health, education, legal protection and the environment.

74. Her Government had submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child its second report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as its first report on the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. It attached great importance to dialogue with the Committee and would continue to study its conclusions and recommendations and cooperate closely with it.

75. **Mr. Afifi** (Egypt) hoped that the General Assembly would continue to support efforts to promote children's rights and encourage cooperation between Governments, civil society and international institutions to mobilize the necessary resources to ensure the protection of children, who constituted about one third of the population of the world, and to enable them to enjoy their full human rights.

76. In that connection, he referred to the plight of Palestinian children living under occupation who were thereby prevented from exercising their fundamental human rights, the most elementary right being the right to live in freedom. The international community had a role to play in helping Palestinian children to live in families that were not in constant fear of losing their homes, livelihood or freedom.

77. Egypt was a leading country in terms of the rights of children, both nationally and internationally. At the international level, the most important safeguards included instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict. His country had been in the forefront of the States that had signed and ratified those instruments. Egypt had also taken a lead in efforts to set up strategies to protect children from all forms of violence and had hosted the regional consultation on violence against children at the end of June 2005 which had made recommendations on the Secretary-General's study of the subject.

78. At the national level, Egypt had enacted laws which accorded due importance to children, chief among them being the Children's Act which had been passed in 1997. It had also established the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood in 2000, which played an essential role in protecting the rights and welfare of children, and it had set up numerous other important projects focusing on disadvantaged groups such as street children and children with special needs, combating child employment and female circumcision. The previous year had also seen the establishment of the Egyptian Council for Human Rights, a national body for safeguarding the rights of all Egyptians, particularly those of children.

79. Egypt had implemented a number of policies and programmes on the provision of basic services to Egyptian children, particularly in education and health, and as a result had seen an improvement in basic social indicators. In the field of health, the mortality rate for children under 1 year old had fallen during the previous four decades from 182 to 30 per 1,000 live births, and polio had been eradicated at the beginning of the present century. Egypt had also been successful

in curbing the phenomenon of female circumcision under its strategy for eradicating the practice in over 120 Egyptian villages. In the field of education, the dropout rate and illiteracy among children had been reduced by 45 per cent over the previous decade, the enrolment of girls in primary education had increased by 79 per cent and the proportion of children completing basic education had risen to 98 per cent.

80. Despite what had been achieved in promoting the concept of children's rights, his delegation agreed with what the Interim Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict had said in both her statement and the report (A/60/335) to the effect that greater emphasis should be placed on the rights of children in situations of armed conflict. In that context, his delegation had been expecting the report to address the situation of children living under occupation, especially in the occupied Arab territories.

81. All internationally recognized data and indicators relating to the continent of Africa pointed to a steady decline in the economic and social situation of African children. For example, the incidence of AIDS and of other serious diseases, such as hepatitis and malaria, among children was increasing. Moreover, more than 40 million children of primary school age were illiterate because they were forced to bear arms or because of hunger, poverty and the lack of schools. That situation demonstrated the need to seek new machinery for international cooperation to protect the rights of African children, to develop their potential and to achieve the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It also indicated the importance of establishing a real partnership in order to meet the basic needs of children and to ensure that the rising generation was able to play its part in preserving worldwide security and stability.

82. **Ms. Faye** (Senegal) said that the various forms of violence against children, the lack of access to education and health care and the other violations of the rights of the child in developing countries, and in Africa in particular, were a matter of concern to her delegation. Girls, who were especially affected by exploitation, were sometimes abused as domestic servants or reduced to working as prostitutes. Rural children often suffered from non-enrolment in schools, and illiteracy among girls was widespread. Furthermore, children in Africa were exposed to the perils of street life and human trafficking and implicated in armed conflict.

83. Meeting the needs of children and protecting their rights was above all a national responsibility. Therefore, her Government had worked with NGOs and local officials, through a coordinating committee under the Senegalese presidency, to support the establishment of a system for monitoring the protection of the rights of the child. Such issues as female circumcision, begging, exploitation and sexual abuse were part of the poverty reduction strategy paper and were regularly discussed as part of the national agenda by the stakeholders.

84. The specific actions undertaken by her Government to protect the rights of the child included a nationwide polio vaccination campaign, the establishment of child-care centres for children aged 2-4, the extension of scholarships and the promotion of school enrolment for girls, an HIV/AIDS awareness campaign and a number of other measures to improve the quality of life of children. In conclusion, she commended the support provided by UNICEF to her Government to implement its child-welfare policies and called on the Fund and African Governments to cooperate more closely to ensure peace and prosperity for the children of Africa.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.